

A
STRONG-MINDED WOMAN;

OR,

TWO YEARS AFTER.



BY

WILLIAM A. HAMMOND,
AUTHOR OF "LAL," "DOCTOR GRATTAN," "MR. OLDMIXON," ETC.



NEW YORK :
D. APPLETON AND COMPANY,
1, 3, AND 5 BOND STREET.
1885.

STRONG-MINDED WOMAN;

TWO YEARS AFTER.

COPYRIGHT, 1885,
BY D. APPLETON AND COMPANY.

All rights reserved.



NEW YORK:
D. APPLETON AND COMPANY,
135 NASSAU ST.,
NEW YORK.

P 2
3
H 1899
S 8
1885
MAIN

CONTENTS.

CHAPTER.	PAGE
I. RETROSPECTIONS.....	5
II. A FAMILY DINNER	29
III. A POLITICAL MEETING.....	45
IV. MISS BREMEN SPEAKS.....	61
V. MISS BILLY'S BOMBSHELL.....	80
VI. DOUBTS ARE DISSIPATED.....	97
VII. AN ELECTION AND ITS RESULT.....	122
VIII. THEODORA DECIDES.....	144
IX. A JOKE OR A CRIME?.....	164
X. A SOCIETY QUESTION.....	186
XI. A BEGINNING AND AN END.....	208
XII. INFATUATION.....	228
XIII. A DECLARATION AND ITS CONSEQUENCES.....	249
XIV. A DISAPPEARANCE.....	268

CHAPTER.	PAGE
XV. MR. SCOTT.....	289
XVI. REFLECTIONS.....	312
XVII. MACHINATIONS.....	330
XVIII. A TERRIBLE WOMAN.....	350
XIX. INVESTIGATION.....	372
XX. THE WILES OF THE TEMPTER.....	391
XXI. CONSOLATIONS.....	411
XXII. LOSSES.....	427
XXIII. DISCOVERIES.....	448
XXIV. A MEETING.....	468
XXV. "ALL'S WELL THAT ENDS WELL".....	488



A STRONG-MINDED WOMAN.

CHAPTER I.

RETROSPECTIONS.

It was on the first day of November, 1874, that a merry party was assembled in the drawing-room of one of the most elegant houses in Fifth Avenue, in the city of New York. The company, as regarded sex, was very unequally divided ; for while there was present only one representative of the male part of the human family, there were no less than five members of that portion which is, as science has determined, if not the more numerous, certainly the more important.

The time was a few minutes before seven in the evening, and the occasion was the forty-second anniversary of the entrance of the master of the house, the only man present, into this "vale of tears." It was a family party, and each individual member of it was waiting, with more or less impatience, for the French butler to make his appearance at the door, and to announce with a profound bow that "Madame est servie."

While they are in this state of expectancy, the opportunity may be taken to bring them more prominently before the reader.

First, there is Geoffrey Moultrie, whose birthday is being celebrated. Educated at the School of Mines, at

Freiberg, he had begun life as a civil and mining engineer. In this capacity he had done some very important work in Poland, Russia, South America, Mexico, and the United States, and had in consequence, and by judicious investments in stocks that owed all their value to his energy and skill, acquired a large fortune. His first wife was a Polish princess of a poor but ancient family, whose brother, being one of the engineer corps engaged with Moultrie under the latter's father in the construction of a railway near their castle, had introduced him to his family. After some objections on the part of certain of the relatives, on the ground that for a daughter of the House of Lutomski to marry an obscure American engineer would be a disgrace such as no other member of the family had ever incurred, the attachment between the young people was allowed to advance as far as the state of matrimony. This result was hastened, if not entirely brought about, by the fact that the proposed marriage met with the emphatic approval of the Czar, Alexander the Second, who had not long previously ascended the throne, and who had taken a great fancy to young Moultrie; and that inquiry had shown that the family of the American gentleman was quite as old and as notable as that of the Lutomskis. Indeed, while the celebrity of the latter was entirely confined to their own country, and had never passed into the domain of written history, that of Moultrie not only went back to one Geoffrey de Moultrie, who came over with the Conqueror, but stood high on the roll of those that had become famous in his native land.

Soon after his marriage Moultrie and his young bride had departed for Western Kansas, where he had large interests, and where his daughter Lalage was born.

Here, however, the good fortune which had heretofore characterized his life was interrupted. The child, while yet an infant only a few months old, was stolen, and his wife died not long afterward, insane and of a broken heart. Then he had plunged into work, at first more as a means of diverting his mind from the gloomy thoughts with which he was continually oppressed, but persevering after time had in a measure softened his grief, because work had become a second nature to him.

For sixteen years he had been engaged in some of the most stupendous engineering operations that the world had seen. His skill, his energy, his power of mental application, were such that people wondered where they all came from ; for he always appeared to have time not only for mere recreation, but for serious application in the domain of the fine arts. He was an accomplished musician, not only being a brilliant performer on the pianoforte, but a composer as well, and he had written a play that had met with great success in London, where alone as yet it had been produced.

But a little more than two years before he is now introduced to the reader, he had made a visit to a Dr. Willis, then living at Chetolah, his residence, near the town of Hellbender, in the Territory of Colorado. Dr. Willis had a daughter, Theodora, whom Moultrie had met with her father at several seaside resorts during the previous summer, and for whom he had formed what the French call "*une grande passion*." He had then proposed ; but as this action was taken after an acquaintance of only a little more than a month, the young lady, while admitting that she reciprocated his attachment, thought it better to wait a little while before giving him a decided answer. She was a very intellectual as well as a very

practical young woman ; had received a medical education, and had made many interesting experiments, as well as original investigations, in the departments of physiology and natural history. She had no doubt of the sincerity of either Moultrie's or her own affection, but she knew how very tricky the emotions can sometimes be, and she preferred, therefore, to be entirely satisfied not only in regard to the reality of the love between them, but what was of equal importance, its depth and strength.

Matters were therefore allowed to remain in abeyance for the time being, and Moultrie accepted the doctor's invitation to make a visit to Chetolah some time during the ensuing autumn, it being understood that if he and Theodora were of unchanged minds relative to their affection for each other, their marriage should soon take place. Accordingly, in the latter part of September, two years previously, the journey to Hellbender was made. His mother, sister—a young widow, Mrs. Sincote—and her daughter—a child of ten—Florence Sincote, being included in the invitation, and accompanying him. His own love had not flagged, and neither, as the event proved, had Theodora's ; for on the morning after his arrival at Chetolah he had again pressed his suit, and had met with a gracious acceptance. Shortly afterward they were married.

But Moultrie's visit to Colorado had not only resulted in his obtaining a charming woman for his wife. Information had been received by the doctor that confirmed suspicions that had been formed several years previously, but that could not at the time be established, that a notorious horse-thief and murderer named Bosler had been the abductor of Moultrie's child, and that she was then

living with Bosler as his daughter. Measures, among which was the hanging of Bosler by a vigilance committee, were at once taken to obtain possession of the girl, who was then a little over seventeen years of age, and success had crowned the efforts. She was one of those present in the drawing-room awaiting the announcement of dinner.

Second, there was his wife, late Theodora Willis, the only daughter of Dr. Willis, a wealthy Virginian, at one time a medical officer of the army, but more recently a citizen of Colorado. He had gone to that Territory soon after the discovery of gold and silver, for the purpose of restoring the health of his wife. He had made large and fortunate investments in mines and lands, and was the originator and chief proprietor of the town of Hellbender—so named from a curious reptile found in a mountain lake near by—his residence, Chetolah, being situated close to the place.

Theodora Willis had been brought up in a rather peculiar manner. Her mother had died not long after her arrival in Colorado, and the education of the young girl had devolved entirely on her father. His mind, in consequence of his anxiety in regard to his wife's health and grief at her death, had become slightly unhinged, but only in one direction. He, in fact, became a monomaniac on the subject of his daughter's intellectual abilities, and in regard to the status that women should occupy in social and political affairs. He was constantly urging her for official positions of various kinds, consulted her in his difficult medical cases, and left no occasion unimproved for descanting on her pre-eminence—not only over all other women, but over men as well—in all those qualities that are supposed to indicate special

fitness for great state and municipal offices. As to women as a sex, he thought they ought to take the place of men in the affairs of nations, and that they were far superior to men in mental development. His derangement was well known to his daughter, who by no means contributed her influence to the maintenance of his disordered ideas, and was eventually recognized by himself, his monomania suddenly disappearing from the effects of a very positive address, made by one of his friends, a Mr. Tyscovus, at a political meeting in opposition to some exceedingly extravagant views he had enunciated.

Theodora, however, while not courting political advancement for her sex, was a strenuous advocate for greatly enlarged courses of study for women and their elevation to an intellectual stage above that which they then occupied. Under the tuition of her father and a Fraulein Schwartzfeld, who had taken a medical degree at Zurich, she became a proficient in comparative anatomy, and, as the former had said in a conversation with his friend Tyscovus, had "dissected every kind of an animal from man to insects." She had also held advanced views relative to the development hypothesis, and had conducted a series of investigations in evolution that had led to the most astonishing results. A very complete laboratory had been erected as a wing to Chetolah, and here she was accustomed to spend the greater part of her time in physiological, physical, and chemical researches.

But notwithstanding this decided intellectual bias, Theodora Willis was deficient in none of the mental characteristics of a true woman. The emotional part of her mental being was well developed, and while hers was not one of those warm-hearted natures that become

demonstrative in the presence of circumstances calculated to arouse the passions, she experienced probably fully as much feeling in her own quiet way as those who evinced more obvious disturbance.

She had married Moultrie not only because she loved him devotedly, but because she perceived that he was a man that she could not fail to respect. Probably neither of these factors would have sufficed to make her become his wife, and it could not fairly be said that she had been influenced in her judgment of his character by the fact that she found herself giving him her love. She had weighed him in her intellectual balance without prejudice for or against him, and had deliberately arrived at the conviction that she would be able to add to his happiness, and he to hers.

Her manner was peculiarly winning, gracious, and frank. She had always contended that a woman could, when actuated by high and ennobling motives, attend the dissecting room and study human anatomy without losing any of the freshness or bloom of her womanly nature ; and certainly the result in her own case appeared to give countenance to that opinion.

In person Theodora Moultrie, as she was now, was tall and slender, without her figure being in the slightest degree emaciated. Her hair was of the golden auburn hue that a chestnut sometimes exhibits when the burr has been open toward the autumn sun. Her eyes were gray ; not a shade of green or of blue, or of any intermediate hue, but a good, honest gray, like that of the back of the gray squirrel, with little irregular spots of darker gray scattered over the irides. Her forehead was rather low, and her eyebrows—somewhat darker in color than her hair—were well arched, though not to such an extent

as to create the expression of astonishment which persons with very high-arched eyebrows always exhibit. Her mouth was her most expressive feature, even when in repose. There was nothing severe in its outlines, but the lips, without being tightly pressed together or left half open, were kept just sufficiently in contact to remove all idea of weakness from the mind of the observer, and at the same time prevent the conception that she was a hard and unemotional woman. And it was a mobile mouth. When she laughed or smiled, it opened wide enough to display two rows of white and regular teeth, upon which there was not a spot or blemish, and then two tiny dimples appeared at the corners, only for an instant, as though just for the purpose of emphasizing the expression. Her complexion, while not what is called "blooming," had a light shade of pink on the cheeks, not sharply defined at the outlines, but fading gradually away till it was imperceptibly lost in the white with the tinge of old ivory that was the prevailing hue of the rest of her face. Certainly she was very beautiful, and evidently she knew how to enhance her good looks by the use of those legitimate means the knowledge of which appears to be innate with most women. Then her hair was worn in the simplest manner, merely being twisted into a knot behind, while a few reddish-brown curls lay negligently on her forehead. In this way the classical head was best shown in all its beauty. What matters it how perfect the shape of a woman's head may be if she loads it down with masses of false hair, arranged without the slightest regard for the canons of art? Doubtless some heads are improved in appearance by such a procedure, but Theodora Moultrie's was not one of them. The more of it that was seen

as nature made it, the more it was certain to be admired.

When she spoke other charms were revealed, and not her least by any means. Not only did she speak the English language perfectly, but she knew just how to accentuate her words and to intone her phrases to suit the ideas she was expressing. And then her voice ! It was one such as probably few women in New York not of Southern or late English origin possess. Not that the New York women have not the vocal apparatus as perfectly formed as that of their Southern sisters, but for the reason that they are rarely taught how to use it for conversational purposes. They talk, but as a rule they do not converse.

There was no physical weakness about Theodora. She could eat a good big piece of beefsteak for her breakfast, with the accessories of bread and butter and a cup of well-made coffee, besides doing full justice to her other meals ; and then she walked four miles every day. Rain or shine, snow or sleet, hot or cold, no matter what the weather, she walked four miles. It took her two hours nearly to do this, and then the rest of the morning was spent in such occupations as were not obligatory, but that assuredly materially contributed to her well-being and happiness. There was no laboratory in the house in Fifth Avenue. She had voluntarily given up all those practical studies that necessitated a workshop of the kind. But she read and wrote in a lovely little boudoir adjoining the library, in which there was a microscope for such occasional use as might be suggested by topics of reading or conversation, and that besides was well stored with such of her own individual books as were her special friends or favorites.

Theodora was fond of fine clothes in the proper sense of the expression. Her taste was so correct that nothing could have induced her to wear bad materials unartistically made, or into the construction of which incongruous colors entered. For mere ornaments, as such, she cared little, rarely wearing jewelry of any description; and when she did array herself in anything of the kind, they consisted of a necklace, a brooch, or a bracelet, either veritable antiques, or fashioned after some ancient models, the beauty and value of which depended not so much on the material of which they were made as on the perfection of the workmanship of which they had been the recipients. Beyond some old heirlooms Theodora did not probably own a diamond, or a ruby, or other precious stone, but she possessed a gold Etruscan necklace which had once been worn by Julia, the daughter of Julius Cæsar and Cornelia, and another of intaglio gems two thousand years old, and which no lapidary of the present day could hope to rival in perfection of design and execution. She was rich, her husband was rich, her father was rich; but the wearing of any article of apparel or of ornament merely because it would display her wealth would have been an abomination to her.

Third, Miss Lalage Moultrie. This young lady was, at the time this history begins, in her nineteenth year. Her life had been a checkered one, but through her good sense and strength of character she had succeeded in escaping the pitfalls with which her pathway in life had abounded. While only a few months old she had been stolen by one Jim Bosler, who had been described subsequently as the "worst man between the two oceans." In a fit of drunken rage he had killed his own infant of the same age and of like features. Fearful that exposure

would come on the return of his wife, who was temporarily absent, as well as other inconveniences being caused, he had proceeded to Moultrie's house near by and had abducted the child. He then took it to his own home, and had succeeded, without suspicion for several years, and without detection for many more, not only in passing her off upon the public as his own daughter, but even in deceiving his wife to the same effect.

The child's own mother had died shortly after the kidnapping, and her ostensible mother was a poor, weak creature, wholly under the control of her husband, but who, although brought down by her marriage almost to his low level, had never been wholly bad. Occasionally, and especially during the latter years of her life, a disposition to get her husband away from his associations, with the hope of reforming him and of improving the social conditions of herself and the child, was manifested ; but it never came to anything definite. She died suddenly from pulmonary hemorrhage during a violent altercation with her husband.

This man was a professional horse-thief and gambler. During his residence in Colorado, whither he had gone about the time the Willises had settled there, he was known to have killed eleven men. Finally he was tried and hanged by the Vigilance Committee ; but before his execution confirmed very positive information that had only been received a few days previously, that Lal—Mrs. Bosler had given her the name of Lalla—was not his daughter. Irrefragable evidence showed that she was Moultrie's long-lost child.

Bosler had formed plans for marrying her to one of his own companions, a man almost as bad as himself, but

these were defeated by Lal's escape and by the timely action of the Vigilance Committee.

A short time before this catastrophe a young Polish nobleman, Tyscovus by name, had arrived at Jim Bosler's cabin, which was situated a few miles from Hellbender, on a high knoll or butte. He had been apparently directed to this exact spot in a dream or a vision, and though not in the least superstitious, he had acted in accordance with the directions given him, and had found the place exactly as it had been described.

He was engaged in the preparation of an elaborate work on sociology, and desired to reside where he could be removed from all disturbing influences. He had accordingly bought the place and had made it his residence. Seeing Lal, he had been struck with her beauty, and an incident that took place had shown him how true she was of heart, and how great was her capacity for mental and moral development. He loved her before he knew that she was anything else than the daughter of a horse-thief and a murderer ; and of course the discovery that her mother was a Polish princess, and her father one of the most eminent of American citizens, had not tended to diminish his affection.

But although Moultrie was glad to find that an attachment existed between his daughter Lalage—or Lal, as she continued to be called by her friends, with equal appropriateness as when it was thought her name was Lalla—and a gentleman so admirable in every respect as was Tyscovus, he deemed it advisable that marriage should be deferred for at least two years. This conclusion had been arrived at not only on account of her youth—which, perhaps, had that been the only obstacle, might have been overlooked—but for the reason that her edu-

cation had been almost entirely neglected, and that she had never had those associations with ladies and gentlemen of her own station in life so necessary to give polish and refinement of manner, and to otherwise fit her for the duties and the amenities of the marriage state.

Lal was endowed with an ample quantity of good sense, and she had at once recognized the force of the arguments that her father had addressed to her. Indeed, when Tyscovus informed her of his love and his desire to make her his wife at the earliest possible moment, she had, while expressing her own affection, declared with equal positiveness that she was not fit to be his wife. She saw with a woman's discernment that while he was an educated gentleman, with manners and forms of speech befitting his social position, she was uneducated, ignorant of those conventionalities of life without which society would be unendurable, and speaking a debased dialect, every word of which showed her unacquaintance with the first principles of polite conversation. She was of keen sensibilities as well as of quick intelligence, and she would have been intensely mortified if at any time the man that she loved and had married should have had occasion to be ashamed of his wife.

Accordingly she had come East with her father, leaving her lover in possession of his butte, and on which he intended to erect a large and substantial house in time to receive his wife when the two years of probation had expired. It was agreed that in the meantime they might correspond, and that Tyscovus should visit his *fiancée* twice a year for periods of two weeks. Owing, however, to circumstances beyond his control, the two years had nearly elapsed without his having been able to make a single visit.

Lal had had, in consequence of the low moral tone of her former associations, while she thought she was the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Bosler, rather loose ideas in regard to the rights of property-holders, and these were especially manifested in the direction of horse-flesh. She had so often heard her reputed father, Mr. Jim Bosler, assert that "hosses was things as no man had ary a right to call his'n onless he knowed enough to keep 'em," that she accepted the diction as sound ethical doctrine, and was at all times ready to defend it *vi et armis*, if necessary. But as she grew older an occasional doubt—the first promptings of her better nature—arose in her mind relative to the rectitude of her ostensible father's conduct. Apparently these did not come from teachings, or examples, or from any other extraneous causes. There was no source open to her from which they could have been derived. The man that she had been taught to regard as her father was a notorious horse-thief and murderer, who justified his stealings by contending that he had an inherent right to take horses and mules whenever and wherever he could find them, and his murders by the plea that any one that endeavored to prevent him gratuitously risked his life, and must take the consequences of his folly. The woman that she looked upon as her mother had been a respectable girl, but after her marriage with Jim Bosler she had assimilated herself to her husband, losing the conscientiousness she had once had, and justifying him in all his crimes against society. It was not, therefore, a matter for surprise that Lal should have arrived at womanhood with many notions that were altogether incompatible with the principles of sound morality. The wonder was that, notwithstanding the vicious influences to which she

was constantly subjected, she had preserved an essentially pure nature that not even bad precept and worse example could destroy. The germ of goodness was in her heart, and it only required the proper germinating forces to be brought to bear upon it, in order to cause it to break through the thin coating that concealed it from view. The occasion was not wanting.

She had found a little book that Tyscovus had lost, and instead of returning it to the owner, had appropriated it to her own use. The book was a biography of one of his ancestors, and in reading it she came across many examples of virtue and self-sacrifice that seemed to be just such as she needed to have set before her at this stage of her existence. She perceived how lamentably she fell short of the standards of excellence that the perusal of this little book brought to her knowledge, and, filled with remorse, she determined to return the volume, confess her crime, and take the consequences that she might have incurred.

But instead of upbraiding her for her offence, Tyscovus had sympathized with her in her repentance, and had made her a present of the book. Overcome by the kindness and graciousness of his treatment, her whole heart had gone out to him, and she had fallen at his feet acknowledging his goodness and praying for his welfare. Then it was that, as he raised her from the floor, their eyes met, and the story of their love began to be told.

No one ever labored more assiduously in the direction of self-improvement than had Lalage Moultrie since her arrival in New York, nearly two years before. Of course she had all the facilities at her command that her father's love and wealth could afford, but she had incentives to work without which her progress would have been

comparatively slow. Her love for Tyscovus had suffered no diminution. On the contrary, time and absence seemed to have added to its intensity, and she had made good use of all the advantages she possessed in order to fit herself to be his wife not only in name, but in all that is implied by companionship and friendship.


In all this she had succeeded, if not in accordance with her own expectations, certainly to a greater extent than the most sanguine of her friends had supposed would be possible. In the first place, she had a very clear idea of her own deficiencies, and, in the next, she was not spoiled by her elevation in social rank. She knew, for instance, that her manner of speech was not such as educated and refined persons employed, and she therefore set herself to work to get rid of a characteristic that more than any other feature was calculated to shock those with whom she would soon be brought into relation. It was a difficult undertaking for one who had for so many years been absolutely cut off from association with persons who spoke the English language grammatically, and for one who had, in consequence, acquired an uncouth dialect, nearly every word of which was a barbarism or solecism, or both. But she had persevered, and, assisted by her father, who took this particular part of her education under his especial supervision, she had attained to a degree of proficiency in the correct use of her native tongue that not one young woman in a thousand of those to "the manner born" ever succeed in reaching. Moultrie prided himself on his use of good English. Theodora spoke always with a purity of diction that showed that she had been in association all her life with educated ladies and gentlemen. A muddy sentence was never heard from either of them. Example, there-

fore, more influential, as it always is, than precept, gave its powerful aid to accomplish the object in view, and so it resulted that, in the course of less than two years, Lal's speech was such that no one hearing her talk would have supposed that she had ever had any other companionship than that of men and women of good grammatical repute.

But Lal's English, though grammatical, was not always colloquial. It was as yet too precise and formal for ordinary conversation. Thus she very generally said "cannot" for "can't," "do not" for "don't," "I am" for "I'm," "I have" for "I've," and so on. It was scarcely a fault, and, indeed, often gave an added charm to her speech, which went well with her earnestness and evident sincerity.

Again, at times, when intensely interested or excited, she fell unconsciously into her old dialect. It appeared, therefore, that she had not yet learned her new language so thoroughly as to use it automatically. She had to give her mind to it, just as does a musician to a composition that he has not thoroughly learned.

It does not take long for an American girl, with sufficient opportunity, to learn good manners. Six months in a boarding-school under the charge of a lady of gentle breeding will change a backwoods amazon to a duchess of the *ancien régime*, so far as mere externals go, though she may at heart be as uncouth as a Pawnee squaw. Lalage Moultrie had the great advantage of being inately refined. Her father was a gentleman, as were his father and his father's father, and so on back for many generations. Her mother was a princess of the House of Lutomski, one of the oldest in Poland. It would have been strange, therefore, if such good blood as



flowed in her veins had not brought with it something more than the material elements of the sanguine current—certain predispositions and tendencies that could not have been wholly restrained, no matter how adverse were the influences to which they might be subjected, and which required very little developing power to bring them to fruition. These she had, and hence the sweetness and gentleness that characterized her speech and actions were not a mere superficial coating, but an expression of her power of thought and feeling.

And yet Lalage had a spirit of her own that, when roused into activity by what she considered indignity or oppression, made itself felt in the most unmistakable manner. Indeed, before her rescue from the man who had stolen her, and who had assimilated her so far as he could to his own degraded and vicious nature, she had at times displayed a violence of anger, conjoined with a physical capacity to take care of herself when occasion required, that argued strongly for her mental and bodily powers of resistance or attack, and her disposition to use them without much regard for the consequences to her antagonist.

But as she came more and more thoroughly under the civilizing influences to which she had been for now nearly two years subjected, she saw the necessity of self-control in this respect. For Lalage to be aware of a fault was all that was sufficient to excite her to make strenuous exertions to get rid of it. But it was in this direction that she encountered the most difficulty, and at times, notwithstanding all her efforts, she would give way to her temper to a degree out of proportion to the exciting cause. Still, it was so manifestly honest, and she was so sincere in her repentance for any unreasonable

outburst of indignation, that those who experienced its effects were not loath to accord their forgiveness. It was when she was conscious of having committed a fault that her inborn honesty and sense of justice came out strongest, and then nothing would satisfy her till full reparation had been made.

In personal appearance, save in the matter of height, Lalage Moultrie was very different from Theodora. Like her, she was tall, but she was more robust and powerful, and of greater powers of endurance. While Theodora would walk her four miles a day and feel that it was as much as was good for her, Lalage would think nothing of three times the distance, and be as fresh when it was finished as she was when she began. Her step was as elastic and free as that of a young blacktail deer. In fact, every movement had the grace and accentuation which only well-developed muscles can give.

Up to the time of her recovery by her father she had been used to the very roughest sort of work with feet and hands. It was nothing then for her to run barefooted up and down the stony road that led from the cabin on the butte to the plain below, and to pass the greater part of the time shoeless and stockingless. Indeed, except in winter and upon grand occasions, barefootedness was her normal condition. And a like state of affairs existed in regard to her hands. She did the most of the cooking, washing, and ironing of the family of three. It was not much collectively, but it was enough to spoil for the time being what would otherwise have been among her most charming features ; and the fact that she chopped the greater part of the wood used as fuel, and often looked after the horses, feeding them and hitching them up when necessary, made matters still

worse, so far as softness and whiteness were concerned. But her hands and feet were so beautifully formed that no native-born Polish princess, unless she had American blood in her veins, ever possessed prettier ones, and it did not take long for all signs of hard usage to disappear.

Lal's hair was as black as the plumage of a crow, but, unlike most black hair, it was as fine and soft as silk. It was a most luxuriant growth, reaching, when she let it down, far below her waist, and enveloping her head and bust in its raven-hued strands. Like Theodora, she wore it very simply. In some things art improves upon nature, but Lal's hair was not one of them.

It goes almost without saying that her eyes were as black as her hair. So they were; large, soft, lustrous eyes, that could be laughing, or loving, or pitying, or fierce, or sad, in accordance with the emotion that swayed her, and that never sent out a glance that was not honest and true. Of course, too, they were surmounted by black eyebrows and fringed by black eyelashes—long, silken lashes that “kissed her soft cheek's blooming tinge” as it cropped out of the clear olive tint of her complexion.

Her mouth was of fuller contour than was Theodora's; not so delicately chiselled, perhaps, nor so intellectual in its expression, but certainly more emotional. Lal laughed a good deal in those days, and when she did she showed teeth that a Congo queen might have envied.

It had not taken her long to learn the art of dress. But few young women, lifted up, as she had been, out of the depths of squalor to a state of affluence, would have shown a tenth part of the moderation in the matter of external adornment that was exhibited by Lalage Moultrie. There was no disposition to run riot with the hues

of the rainbow or the products of the silk looms ; all was subdued and quiet. Her beauty was of the kind that took care of itself. To-night she wore a black silk frock trimmed sparsely with bands and bows of crimson ribbon.

Around her neck was a curious Circassian necklace that she had worn when she was stolen, and that had been recovered at about the same time that she was identified as Moultrie's daughter. To it hung, as a pendant, a locket that Tyscovus had sent her, and which was made of gold that he himself had worked out of the deposits of Wild-cat Creek. This and a Jacqueminot rose in the bosom of her gown were all the ornaments she wore.

The dowager Mrs. Moultrie must have been fully sixty-two years of age, but time had dealt gently with her, both in regard to her mind and body ; for she looked and felt younger than she really was. She was a well-disposed woman, but at the same time, like some others of her sex, unduly inclined to meddle with things that did not especially concern her, and to carry her point either by continually harping on the matter at issue, thus wearying her opponents, or by means not strictly legitimate. She had very decided opinions of her own on most of the topics that engaged the attention of mankind the world over. In fact, it was a matter of pride with her never to confess her ignorance of any subject. As a necessary consequence, many of the views she held and expressed were formed from little or no knowledge, but jumped at as a cat would jump at a mouse, hit or miss. She never lost her temper, strange to say, or manifested elation, whether she suffered defeat or gained a victory, but preserved the most aggravating mental composure and suavity of manner, which it must sometimes have cost her a sickening pang to manifest.

She was not dependent on her son for support. She had her own establishment near the Central Park, besides a magnificent country-seat on the North River, and lived in a style befitting her wealth, which, if not very great as wealth goes nowadays, was more than sufficient to allow of luxurious living.

Her daughter, Mrs. Sincote, a little over on the shady side of thirty, had been a widow for ten years. She had married a lieutenant in the army soon after his graduation at West Point, one who, like most of his species, had nothing besides his pay to live on.

The war between the States was then in full blast, and Lieutenant Sincote, like other graduates at the time, was denied the usual leave of absence, and was ordered to join his regiment, then fighting in the Wilderness under General Grant. She never saw him again alive, for he fell with a bullet through his heart in one of the numerous battles of that campaign, and he never saw his daughter, who was born after his death.

Mrs. Sincote was a pretty looking woman, who dressed well on the liberal allowance her brother gave her, but who, besides being amiable and well disposed, was rather negative in her mental characteristics. In any argument going on before her she always expressed an opinion in accordance with the views of the last speaker. She could not, therefore, see more than one side of a question at the same time, and it was accordingly no unusual thing for her to express as many views on a topic of conversation as there were persons engaged in the discussion. She, with her daughter Florence, resided with her mother, and but for the general weak tone of her character the association would not have been a pleasant one for her. As it was, she got along very well with

the dowager, for the reason that she never did or said anything that in the least savored of opposition to anything said or done by the old lady. At times, however, there was trouble, just as there was between the wolf and the lamb, and mainly on account of the fact that Mrs. Moultrie had her own ideas of the character of the education to be given to Florence. Now, although Mrs. Sincote never interposed the shade of an objection to the very preposterous notions of her mother, her very passivity led the latter to seek her opponents elsewhere. Teachers and Moultrie himself were made parties to the one-sided contest, and then Julia—Mrs. Sincote's first name—was reproached, till she was thrown into a semi-hysterical condition, with her want of interest in her child's education. However, such occasions were rare, and on the whole, as we have said, the mother and daughter got along very well together.

Julia Sincote had been one of the party that visited the Willises with Moultrie when he got his wife and found his daughter. Although she had been thrown very little into the society of Count John Tyscovus, or plain Mr. John Tyscovus, as he preferred to be called—everybody in Poland, as he said, owning a ten-acre lot being a count—she had fallen very much in love with him. All women liked Tyscovus; his way with them flattered them, while it had not the appearance of being flattery. And a man with that way, if personally unobjectionable, takes their hearts by storm. Of course she said nothing about the passion that had arisen in her heart, but it was none the weaker for that; and the fact that her niece was betrothed to him, although it probably forced her to see the hopelessness of the emotion she had conceived, did not tend to lessen its force. She was

not a woman of strong feeling, but she was very tenacious of her sentiments, weak though they were, and while she would certainly not have sacrificed herself for the man she loved, she probably, if success had appeared to her to be a probable result, would not have hesitated to sacrifice any one else. So far as her love for Tyscovus was concerned, she had long since made up her mind that it would never come to anything ; but she rather enjoyed the idea of nursing a hopeless passion, and of meditating over her forlorn state as a life-long martyr.

Notwithstanding the state of depression in which she considered herself to be, she was on excellent terms with Lalage, though she never trusted herself to talk of Tyscovus with her, or even to mention his name in her presence. Of her brother Geoffrey she stood in wholesome awe, not only because she was dependent on him for her ability to dress as she pleased, to go everywhere, and to entertain handsomely, but because she very well knew that he would tolerate nothing that savored of disloyalty either to himself or his daughter.

And, last of all, there was Florence Sincote, a child of eleven, whose importance in the world was yet to come, and who had not yet lived long enough to accumulate the materials of a history. She was bright and vivacious, rather pretty, and probably resembling in face and mind her father more than her mother. She was present on sufferance, and for this occasion only, by reason of the fact of its being her uncle's birthday.

With these formal introductions and brief account of the antecedents of some of the chief personages of this history, the groundwork for the detail of their subsequent actions is sufficiently laid.

CHAPTER II.

A FAMILY DINNER.

THE large and elaborate Dutch clock, which not only struck the hours and half hours, but chimed a dozen tunes and told the day of the week and of the month, the phases of the moon, the height of the sun, besides giving other valuable information, and which stood on the first landing of the staircase, had just finished a performance on its bells that was intended for an eighteenth-century pastoral. The first stroke of seven had just sounded when François, the butler, was seen standing in the doorway that opened into the wide hall. At the second stroke he bowed to Theodora, and at the same instant the words "*Madame, est servie*" flowed mellifluously from his lips, and ere the reverberations of the third stroke had ceased the important announcement had been made, and the prandial herald had disappeared. Moultrie gave his arm to his mother, and the procession, of which Theodora and Lalage brought up the rear, took up its line of march to the dining-room.

It was a large and handsome apartment, capable of dining forty people comfortably. The prevailing tone of the walls, which was a dull red, was given by old Cordova leather which Moultrie had picked up in Spain. On the marquetry floor was a thick Indian rug, which covered it up to about four feet from the walls all around, leaving bare that extent of the elaborate inlaid

work. The ceiling was of a pale blue tint, the centre being specked with stars, butterflies, and birds in gold, but all flat. Moultrie was too correct in his artistic taste to permit any decoration in relief, or with the appearance of relief, to go on the ceiling or even the walls of his house. Such abominations as vases of flowers, cupids, and garlands sticking, in violation of the laws of nature, to a flat, horizontal surface, would not have been tolerated in his establishment, or in one over which Theodora presided.

From the centre of the ceiling hung a brass Moresque chandelier, which was a chandelier in reality, as it held fifty wax candles, and from the four corners depended four lamps of the same metal and of most intricate Arabic workmanship. Moorish and Arabic cabinets stood against the walls, and were filled with rare specimens of glass and pottery.

Of course, Theodora sat at the head of the table, and Moultrie at the foot. On his right sat his mother, and on his left his daughter. On Theodora's right was her sister-in-law, Mrs. Sincote, and on her left her niece by marriage, Florence Sincote.

"With two others I might mention," said Moultrie, as he sat down, and looking, as he spoke, alternately at his wife and daughter, "our company to-night would be complete."

"I think I know what papa is doing," said Theodora, with a musical little laugh, and fastening a bouquet of Jacqueminot roses in her corsage. "He is telling Mr. Higgins to proceed with all possible despatch to the presence of those amphibious personages, the 'horse-marines,' and lay his proposition before them."

"Why specially to-night, dear?" observed the dow-

ager, with a tone and manner as though she felt compelled to ask a question the answer to which was of no possible importance to her—"why on the occasion of Geoffrey's birthday?"

"Oh," replied Theodora, still laughing, "Geoffrey's birthday has nothing to do with it, one way or the other. For the last five years Mr. Higgins has come at half past six to talk to papa about reforms in the politics of the Territory. At seven precisely he takes his departure, and is always told by papa to tell his plans to the 'horse-marines.' I don't suppose that the ceremony has been intermitted because this is Geoffrey's birthday."

"Thanks, dear," said the dowager, languidly; "it is always so much better to understand things."

"And what do you think Tyscovus is doing, Lal?" observed Moultrie to his daughter. "Is he, too, discussing politics?"

"No, father"—she always called him "father"—she replied, while the color of her cheek deepened a little, and a smile passed over her face, "I think John is just about beginning his second pipe. He is sitting in front of the fire in his new house on the butte, and is thinking of us, and—and," she added, hesitatingly, "wishing he was here."

"Or rather," said Moultrie, laughing, "he is thinking of you and wishing you were there. Won't that do as an amendment, Lal?"

Lal blushed still more, and all the rest laughed.

"How many pipes does he smoke?" inquired the dowager, with a little more interest in her voice than she had yet shown.

"Six," replied Lal, as she raised an oyster from its shell to her mouth.

“Six !” exclaimed the dowager, in astonishment, real or affected—“six pipes every evening ! My dear, you should write and tell him that science has demonstrated the fact that the excessive use of tobacco induces a peculiar kind of thirst that can only be satisfied by indulgence in whiskey. All inordinate users of tobacco sooner or later die drunkards.”

As she uttered these words, with all the oracular force of which she was capable, she squeezed the last drop of juice from a piece of lemon on her last oyster, which act, equally with her speech, gave evidence of the intensity of her feelings.

“But John never drinks whiskey, grandmother,” said Lal, with a touch of indignation in her voice and a look at the old lady that expressed a like feeling. “And I’m quite sure—oh, yes, very sure, that he will not die a drunkard.”

“You should have heard Mr. Quarton’s lecture the other night, my dear, and then perhaps you would look at the matter in a different light. Observations made in the cases of two thousand six hundred and ten inveterate smokers of tobacco showed that two thousand five hundred and seventeen—all but ninety-three—drank whiskey. Of course Mr. Tyscovus may be one of the very small proportion that escapes—less than four per cent, my dear, if I compute correctly—but it is an awful risk to run.” And her tone became quite pathetic, as she apparently had in her mind’s eye the picture of Tyscovus staggering to a drunkard’s grave.

“I think you are quite right, Lal, as regards Mr. Tyscovus,” said Theodora from the other side of the table, “however right mother may be as to the twenty-five hundred and odd other inveterate smok-

ers. A more abstemious man I never saw in all my life."

"Thanks, mamma!" exclaimed Lal, her face beaming with pleasure. "Mr. Quarton does not know John at all, and grandmother knows him very slightly, or she would not say such things of him. Do you think John will die a drunkard, father?" she continued, turning to Moultrie and taking hold of the hand that was nearer to her.

"About as soon as I will, my dear," answered Moultrie, smiling at her eagerness. "Perhaps not so soon, for I understand I am to be nominated for Congress to-morrow night, and the canvass and the election may get me into such a habit of dram-drinking that a drunkard's grave may ultimately be my receptacle."

"How can you talk so absurdly on such a serious subject, Geoffrey!" ejaculated his mother, holding up both hands, as though horrified at his scoffing manner. "And is it really possible," she continued, her voice assuming a tone in which astonishment and sorrow were mingled in about equal proportions, "that an American gentleman cannot become a candidate for membership in the legislative body of his country without being obliged to contract the awful habit of dram-drinking, and incurring the risk of filling a drunkard's grave?"

"I am afraid, mother," rejoined Moultrie, looking at the dowager with a humorous expression on his face, "that I shall have to answer your question in the negative—that is, if the American gentleman aforesaid desires to be elected. I suppose," he added, looking as though he were thinking deeply on the subject, "that vicarious drinking would do. He might, I mean for a small consideration, and, of course, supplying the whiskey, hire

men to do his drinking for him ; but I fear such a procedure would not be any better on the score of morality than doing it himself."

"Geoffrey didn't tell you, mother," said Theodora, "that he has almost made up his mind to enter the field of politics. He thinks he would like the life, and, moreover, he is not without the hope that he may be of some service to the country."

"I hope he will do nothing of the kind," rejoined the dowager. "Even if he was joking about the dram-drinking—and he has got so lately that I scarcely ever know whether he is in earnest or not—he would have to associate with such horrid people that it would be difficult for him to escape contamination."

"Well, mother, you have given your vote in the negative," said Moultrie, good-humoredly, "and a very emphatic vote it is. I propose to be entirely under female influence to-night, and to do just as the majority may determine. I have great faith in the intuitions of women, and this time will be guided by them. Now, Lal, it's your turn. What do you say?"

"Yes," she answered, unhesitatingly.

"That seems to be as emphatic a vote in the affirmative as mother's was in the negative. Now, won't you tell why you think I ought to go into politics?"

"But," said Lal, smiling, "I thought voters did not give their reasons when they voted. Besides," she added, with a demure look at her grandmother, "my reasons would be so different from—"

"From those I have advanced," interrupted the old lady. "Don't be restrained on that account, my dear. It is so refreshing in these days of disrespect for their elders to hear a young lady speak diffidently of differing

from those that have had more experience of the world than she has, that I think you deserve encouragement. Pray, go on."

"Yes, I will," exclaimed Lal, with a little quickness and decision in her voice, and a slight heightening of her color. "I do not think my father could be injured by any associations he chose to make. He might go with drunkards, and thieves, and murderers, and instead of them making him bad, he would make them good. That is what I think, and I think the people ought to be glad to get such a man as my father to go to their Congress and help to make their laws, for he could not make any but good ones."

"Brava!" cried Moultrie, clapping his hands. "Now I shall confidently expect the votes of all the other free women. Come, Julia, it is your turn next."

"Oh, I vote yes! I certainly agree with Lalage. You ought to go to Congress for the sake of the country."

"Thanks! Now, Florence, although you are under age we'll allow you this time to express an opinion. Speak, immature young woman!"

"I vote no," said Florence, without hesitation; "because if you went to Congress this winter you couldn't take me skating, as you promised."

"Already self-interest has entered into the election. But suppose, Florry, I should get your cousin, Jack Willdower, to take you to the rink, could I then have the benefit of your vote in the affirmative?"

"Geoffrey!" exclaimed his mother, before Florence could answer, "I am astonished that you should even hint with approval at such a crime as bribery at elections. To be sure, this little episode is all for the sake

of amusement—at least,” she added, with a little cough, “I suppose so. Still your tone of levity cannot but tend to lead an impressionable child like Florence into wrong paths, and predispose to the formation of loose opinions relative to that curse of American politics—bribery. She is just now a close student of ‘McWholley’s Political Economy,’ in which, I assure you, the doctrines expressed are very different from those I have heard to-night.”

“Oh, yes, I forgot that Florry’s political morals were being looked after by Professor McWholley. We had quite a little dispute, I recollect, relative to the child studying such a subject as political economy. I looked into McWholley’s book and I found it pretty tough reading. How far have you got, Florry?”

“Only as far as ‘Capital,’ Uncle Geoffrey.”

“Well, Florry, stop right there, and you will be following the example of every one of your countrymen and women, ‘present company excepted,’ of course. However, keep your vote as it is, for if you were to change we shouldn’t have the benefit of the views of the lady who presides over this table. Madame,” he continued, bowing to Theodora, “you have the casting vote. My fate is in your hands.”

“So that, after all,” said Theodora, with a merry laugh, “it will probably result in your being guided by what I told you when you first mentioned the subject to me—”

“And that was?” interrupted the dowager.

“To accept by all means, not only because the nation will be benefited by his going to Congress, but because it will do him good, and, again, because he wants to go. So it is settled; and if he is tendered the nomination he

will accept ; and if he accepts he will be elected, I hope. There, however, he will have to do without our votes."

Lal waved the end of her table-napkin in token of her delight at the way the voting had gone, and Moultrie returned thanks to his supporters in a humorous little speech. As to the dowager, she seemed for the moment to be somewhat chagrined at the result, but she soon recovered her equanimity, and went on saying sharp things to everybody and being treated good-naturedly in return. All appeared to know that her bark was worse than her bite, and that she often expressed the most preposterous opinions merely for the sake of having the grievance of being contradicted.

"I knew Count Felinski Tyscovus, Lalage, the father of your John," said the dowager, apparently having gathered together her forces for another assault. "He married a friend of mine, and I was one of her bridesmaids, as I have told you before."

"Yes, grandmother," observed Lal, not raising her eyes from her plate, upon which there was a mushroom she was strenuously endeavoring to capture, but which continually eluded her fork.

"He was a very remarkable man, a great scholar, and yet—a very unusual combination—a thorough man of the world, using the expression in its best sense."

"Yes, grandmother, I heard you say the other day that his son was very much like him."

The old lady looked surprised for a moment, and then, without replying to Lal's observation, she turned to Moultrie.

"I suppose you will hardly do more than take up a hotel residence in Washington, and that you will leave Theodora and Lalage here. It will be so easy for you

to run over every Friday night, if you wish to do so, and stay till Monday."

"Perhaps you are anticipating a little," he said, smiling. "I am not elected yet; but I think I may say that if the people of that portion of the city of New York constituting the—really," he added, after a pause, "I forget the number of the Congressional District, but whichever it is—require my services, we shall probably take a house there and set up an establishment. That at least was the conclusion that Theodora and I came to last night."

"And take Lalage away from all the educational advantages she has here! Oh, Geoffrey! I am sure you have not thought of this matter. Think what she will lose by being cut off from her studies and other means of mental improvement. And think, also, of what she will gain by being introduced into such a society as that of Washington."

"Don't trouble yourself about Lalage, mother, please," said Moultrie, gravely. "She may safely be trusted to do what is right regardless of her inclinations. Is it not so, dear?" he continued, turning toward her with a loving smile on his face.

She made no answer save by a look that he understood, and then she raised his hand to her lips.

"Lal will decide that matter for herself, mother," said Theodora. "But we hope you will spend at least a portion of the winter with us should Geoffrey be elected."

"I! I go to Washington! I voluntarily place myself in such a hot-bed of imbecility, and vulgarity, and corruption! My dear," she went on, with a tone of outraged dignity, "if you knew me better you would not make such a suggestion."

“ But it was I who proposed it,” interrupted Moultrie.

“ You !” exclaimed his mother ; “ so much the worse, then, for you *do* know me better.”

“ You spent a season there once, I remember,” said Moultrie, in his defence, “ and if I recollect aright you appeared to enjoy it. Indeed, if I am not mistaken, it was there you first made the acquaintance of the gentleman who subsequently became your husband and my father.”

“ Yes, but that was before the present race of politicians came into power. However, we will not continue the subject.” When the dowager made this observation, it was simply a feint to cover her retreat in a respectable way. “ This is your birthday,” she continued, “ and as the champagne has now come, I propose your health, and that of your wife, and of your daughter, and may you always be to them as good a husband and father as you have been to me a son.”

Moultrie was much touched by these words of his mother, and rising from his chair, bent over and kissed her forehead, while all the others drank the toast that the dowager had proposed. Then Theodora, and Lal, and Mrs. Sincote, and Florence kissed Moultrie and his mother, so that it looked at one time as though the dinner was going to end in a grand osculatory divertisement, as the eating of the dessert, which had just begun to be served, was altogether suspended. However, when every one had recovered composure, and the women had touched their eyes with the corners of their handkerchiefs to absorb the tears that great mental pleasure so generally causes to flow from their lachrymal apparatus, the discussion relative to plans for the future was resumed. There was no doubt that Moultrie would

receive the nomination for Congress from an independent political organization, made up of the best men of both the antagonistic parties, and scarcely a doubt of his election by a large plurality. In the depths of her heart his mother was rejoiced at the prospect of a new road to distinction being offered to her son, but she was so constituted that opposition to everything suggested by others was a necessity of her mental organization. As Moultrie had said to Theodora soon after their marriage, she took the place in the family that the *advocatus diaboli* occupies when a pious individual is proposed for canonization. She brought forward all possible objections to the proposed measure, and then ended by becoming, after its adoption, one of its most strenuous supporters.

In the present instance the evidence of a revolution in her sentiments relative to Moultrie going into politics, and then taking up a permanent residence in Washington during the sessions of Congress, was not long in being forthcoming, and before the company arose from the dinner-table she had not only become an adherent of both plans, but had admitted that it was just possible that she might accept the invitation given her and spend a portion of the coming winter at the seat of government.

During the whole dinner it was observed that Florence had exhibited a preoccupied air that not even the voting and the reference to skating had been entirely competent to remove. When the time came for her to leave for the night, she stood hesitatingly, as though there were still something on her mind, which her uncle observing, called her to him, and said :

“ What’s the matter, Florry ? You look as though you were expecting the sudden advent of the day of

judgment, or some other awful catastrophe. What is it ?”

“She has been told not to speak unless she is spoken to,” observed her grandmother, looking around the table as though she thought the inhibition might properly be applied to the rest of the company. “I saw that she was worried about something or other, but I was anxious to see whether or not she would remain silent in the face of the evident desire to speak that was present. Now you have ruined my experiment in pedo-discipline.”

“Pedo-discipline !” exclaimed Moultrie, laughing heartily ; “what in the name of all that is learned is pedo-discipline ? Oh, yes,” he added, as his classical knowledge, rather musty from disuse, came to his aid, “I recollect. Well, mother, if there is ever an inquisition established for the special discomfort of children, I hope you will be made grand inquisitor. Have I your permission, madam, to allow Florry to tell her troubles ?”

“Geoffrey, I declare you’re getting to be incorrigible. I really do not know to what the change in you is to be attributed. No ; you need not look at your wife with that silly expression on your face. She has had nothing to do with it. I noticed the beginning before your marriage. But I got no thanks for all the pains I am taking with Florence’s education. Julia takes no interest in the matter”—“Oh, mother !” from Mrs. Sincote—“and the whole burden falls on me,” she went on, not deigning to notice the interruption. “You may speak, Florence,” addressing the child, who had remained standing in the middle of the room with her hands crossed before her. “Tell your uncle what troubles you, my dear. He is a very great man, and when he gets into Congress

intends applying a torch to the Potomac." This sally of the old lady's caused much amusement, and when the laugh had ceased Florence began.

"If you please, uncle, there are two things—"

"One at a time, Florence," interrupted the dowager. "How often have I told you not to impair the clearness of any statement you may have to make by mixing your ideas as though you were making a plum-pudding. If you are about to ask questions, keep each entirely distinct from the others. Now, first?"

"If you please, uncle, what is a horse-marine?"

A burst of laughter from all but the dowager greeted this question.

"Now, Geoffrey," she exclaimed, "I hope you see the folly of talking nonsense before a child whose mind is yet in a chrysalis state, and who is therefore not able to discriminate between your sense and your nonsense, if," she added, "there is any difference. You may shake your head and point at Theodora. It is of no consequence who used the word. You are the responsible one. 'Horse-marines,' my dear," turning to Florence, "is not a word that you will find in any dictionary, unless in one entirely devoted to slang, if there is such a book. It is an expression used, I am sorry to say, sometimes by educated and refined people, to signify the improbability or ridiculousness of something told them. If there was such a being as a horse-marine, he would be a naval soldier mounted on a horse, which, of course, would be an absurdity. I hope, Florence, you will never be guilty of uttering such a slangy word." The dowager looked around triumphantly as she delivered this philippic, and then inquired, in her softest tones, "What was the other matter, my dear?"

"Uncle Geoffrey, and Aunt Theodora, and Cousin Lalage all seemed to think that it was the same time at Hellbender that it was here, while at seven o'clock here it was only about five o'clock at Denver, and not five at Hellbender; so you see Dr. Willis and Mr. Tyscovus were not saying 'horse-marines' and smoking pipes. They have just about begun now," she continued, looking at the clock on the mantelpiece.

"Come and kiss me, my dear!" exclaimed the dowager, holding out her arms, into which Florence rushed, while the rest clapped their hands in applause of the depth of learning displayed by the child. "Now, you see what education can do. I almost feel repaid for all my anxiety on your account. How much better, my child, to cultivate your understanding in the way in which I perceive you are doing, than to fill your mind with ideas of slang expressions like 'horse-marines.' Professor Maltanbroon is, I see, doing his duty by you. Now, good-night; kiss your mamma, and make your courtesies to your uncle, and aunt, and cousin. She is a very intelligent child," she continued, after Florence had gone off with her nursery governess, "and if I can only keep her from your influence, Geoffrey, she will make a remarkable woman."

"If she were my daughter," said Moultrie, not noticing his mother's parting shot, "I should prefer that at her age she should be skating with her cousin Jack Willdower rather than to see her bothering her little brain with questions of longitude. What does it profit a girl if she learns that Denver is thirty-one degrees of longitude west of New York and gets Saint Vitus's dance, or some other horrid nervous disease?"

"Florence is as far from any tendency to nervous dis-

ease as you are. I think you might give me credit, Geoffrey, for having some common-sense. Heaven knows, I brought up you and Julia carefully enough, and I think what I could do for my children I might be trusted to do for my grandchildren."

"Certainly you can, my dear mother. If Florry only fares as well as Julia and I did, and develops as strong an intellect, you will have your reward. But what is this?" as the servant brought him a telegraphic despatch. "Ah," he continued, "from our absent friends: your father, my dear, and Tyscovus, Lal. Sending congratulations to me and love to all. It is pleasant to be thought of by those we love. Come!" as he rose from the table; "Theodora will play one of Chopin's Polonaises for us, and Lal will sing that new song she has been practising for a week."

CHAPTER III.

A POLITICAL MEETING.

MOULTRIE had received the nomination for Congress, and a great degree of activity was being manifested by the political adherents of the several candidates in placing the merits of their respective standard-bearers prominently before the public. According to the indications, it appeared to be extremely probable that Moultrie would be chosen; but the managers of his canvass were old party hands, who did not allow their confidence to interfere with their energy. Meetings in favor of Moultrie were being held in various parts of the district, at many of which he had appeared, and had delivered addresses in explanation of his political principles, and of the course which, if elected, he should feel called upon to follow. The question upon which interest mainly centred was that of the tariff. Neither of the candidates of the old political organizations had expressed themselves sufficiently clearly on the subject to satisfy a large body of advanced political economists, who were in favor of practical free-trade, and who had succeeded in bringing a good many workingmen to see the subject in the same light in which it appeared to them. Moultrie had answered in a very satisfactory manner the questions they had put to him, and although he did not go so far as some of the gentlemen who were active in his support, he was considered to be sufficiently

enlightened on the subject to serve as an entering wedge into the matter of revenue reform.

Thus, Moultrie was very far from being in favor of the abolition of custom houses, as were many of the younger and more enthusiastic members of the "Free-Trade Alliance," which had been the chief instrument in bringing about his nomination. He recognized the fact that a tariff properly adjusted upon articles of universal consumption was of all other means for raising revenue for the support of the government the easiest of manipulation and the least oppressive.

But at the same time he had a holy horror of "protection," as it is called, but which, in his opinion, ought to be designated "destruction." He had thought long and deeply upon the subject, and had arrived at the opinion that under the specious plea of offering protection to American labor, and pretending to give employment to the workingman, a high tariff laid upon those articles of foreign manufacture or growth that come into competition with our products not only taxed the people at large for the support of a few, but was really calculated to destroy the very industries it was intended to foster. Only the very day upon which he had been nominated, Mr. Curt, a shoe manufacturer in West Broadway, who had employed at one time over five hundred men and women, had called upon him to explain how the high duty on shoes was ruining his business. "Not only is the leather taxed at a high rate," said this gentleman, "but every single article that enters into the construction of a shoe—the tools with which it is made, the clothes the workmen and workwomen wear, the bread they eat, the medicine they take when they are sick—everything, in fact, that, directly or indirectly, is connected with a

shoe has a protective tax put on it. As a consequence," he continued, "I cannot make shoes as cheaply as they can make them in England, and, accordingly, I have no foreign market. I used to send every year thousands of pairs to Brazil, Mexico, and Cuba, but now I send none, for the English manufacturer undersells me. My only market is the United States. Over-production is the consequence, prices fall, and I have been obliged to discharge half my working force. I want no 'protection,' and I have come to learn from your own mouth just how you stand on this question."

Moultrie had no difficulty in laying his views before Mr. Curt, and in satisfying that gentleman as to his exact position on the tariff question. "If," said the manufacturer, on taking his leave, "you can secure a reduction of fifty per cent from the duty on shoes, I shall be able to employ double the number of men and women that I do now, for then I shall be able to compete with the world."

To be sure, the "Protectionists to American Industry" were up in arms against Moultrie, and they did not fail to fire their batteries upon what they called his "fine-spun theories." They alleged that he was of all men least competent to discuss a question of the kind, or to understand it in its minute connections with every condition of American life, for he was only an American in name, the greater portion of his life having been passed and his wealth acquired in foreign countries. They called his attention to the silk manufacture, which was being built up under his very eyes, and solely as the result of the high duty placed upon the foreign fabric. They advanced the fact that all young nations were protectionists, and that only old ones, whose industries were established,

and which hence did not need the fostering care of the State, were in favor of free-trade. And then they said, "How much better for us to make all we need and pay our own people for it, than to buy the products of foreign nations, and send the gold and silver out of the country to pay for them!" "Without protection," said the Hon. Marcus Aurelius Jackson, who was the sitting member and desired a re-election, "we should be a nation of farmers and miners, with a stray lumberman here and there. Perhaps that is what the gentleman, my opponent, desires, for I understand he has immense mining interests. It probably makes no difference to him where his gold and silver and copper go. The more products of the pauper labor of Europe that come into the country, the greater will be the demand for his precious metals to pay for them—metals which, I am given to understand, are torn from the bowels of the earth not by the Americans, nor by our Irish or German brethren, nor even by our colored friends," he added, as he looked around the hall in which he was speaking, and saw a small group of negro men in one corner of the room, "but by the offscourings of Asia, the degraded Mongol, the leprous Chinese, who, being too low in the scale of creation to understand what an American home is, and whose puny bodies can be kept alive on an amount of food upon which a robust, iron-muscled Caucasian or African would starve, are willing to work for a tenth part of the wages he would have to pay one of you. Think of this, my friends," he continued, after he had recovered the breath spent in this long sentence, "and give your votes to him who knows what your interests are, and who is prepared to serve you to the utmost of his limited ability, and with all the fidelity he has hitherto shown."

This speech was received with great applause by a large assemblage, and the changes were rung time and again on the points brought forward by the honorable gentleman, so that if a ballot could have been taken then and there the speaker would have been elected by an almost unanimous vote.

But not a hundred yards distant, and in another hall, another meeting was being held, and this was constituted mainly of the supporters of Moultrie, together with about fifty workmen belonging to the other parties, who had been specially invited to hear the speech of the Hon. Tom Burton on the question "Does Protection Protect?"

The Hon. Tom Burton was a citizen of Texas, had served the people of his State in the Legislature and in Congress, was a natural born orator in the Texan sense of the expression, and he hated a protective tariff as religiously, or rather as ir-religiously, as the devil is said to hate holy water. He had all the arguments against such an institution at his tongue's end, and he rattled them off so volubly, and interspersed his arguments with so many telling anecdotes, that he put his audience at once in a good humor, and hence did that which of all things was calculated to engage their attention, and to cause them to regard him with favor. He knew perfectly well that, no matter how strongly a speaker may feel what he is saying, if he says it in a dry and uninteresting way he will weary many who will not, or cannot, take the trouble to follow him. He recognized the force with which an orator who makes use of examples and illustrations, or tells a striking story, conveys the ideas that he is seeking to impress upon his hearers. And he was well aware that most people are satisfied to have others do all

the deep reasoning for them, and to give them only the results. However, the Hon. Tom Burton was a valuable ally, and Moultrie's managers had done well to secure him. It is true they had to pay for him. The Hon. Tom was a luxury, and as he was fully aware of his importance in the political world, he made those who needed his services put their hands prettly deeply into their pockets and bring them out well filled. Still, there was no reason for believing that he ever advocated or opposed a measure against his conscience.

The hall in which he was to speak was full, and the invited guests—the fifty or more workmen mentioned—occupied places of honor on the platform, on which also a half dozen ladies were seated. A prominent shipping merchant presided, and there were twenty vice-presidents, and nearly as many secretaries, though what duties the occupants of these honorable positions had to perform was not apparent. Their names were read out, and that was the last of them. Probably very few of them attended the meeting.

The chairman rose, and after a few remarks explanatory of the objects of the assemblage, introduced the Hon. Tom Burton of Texas, "whose eloquence was a household word from one end of this great and glorious Union to the other, and who had made a special study of the subject of the tariff in all its relations to the producer, manufacturer, and consumer, and for whom he would now ask their attention."

Then, amid tremendous applause, the honorable gentleman arose. First he bowed to the chairman, then to the ladies, then to the fifty workmen in their places of honor, then to the great audience before him.

He began with a funny story, which set every one

to laughing ; then he told how unequally the existing tariff worked, and how, with protection as its object, it never could, although formed with the wisdom of all the political tinkers in the country, be anything else but an oppression upon the whole nation for the benefit of the few, and eventually a curse, even to those who at first might derive an unfair advantage from its workings. All this and much more he said, and in a way that, if not deep, or even if not strictly correct, carried conviction to the hearts of all that heard him. For he seemed to believe so firmly every word he uttered, that his very positiveness was sufficient to prevent the timid ones who heard him allowing a doubt of his infallibility to arise in their minds. Then, with a panegyric on Moultrie, in which, while giving him unstinted praise, he scarcely passed the limits of good taste, he sat down amid the plaudits of the meeting.

Several of the workmen asked him pertinent questions, to all of which he answered good-naturedly and apparently satisfactorily, and the chairman was about to declare the assemblage adjourned, when one of the ladies arose and requested permission to say a few words. A hundred voices from various parts of the hall cried " Go on," and the chairman bowing his consent, she proceeded with her remarks.

But hardly had she gotten beyond the opening sentences—which, however, gave no clew to the purport of what she intended to say—than the large assemblage broke out into a perfect uproar of cheers and clapping of hands. The cause was not a matter of doubt ; for coming down the aisle were Moultrie and three or four friends, with whom he had been making a tour of the district, and visiting the places where meetings were

being held. He was obliged to ascend the platform to thank the people for their attendance, and to congratulate them and himself for having so able an advocate of the principles of a tariff for revenue only as his friend, the Hon. Tom Burton. Then, amid renewed applause, he sat down, and the lady speaker resumed her remarks.

"Your chairman," she said, "has not deemed it necessary to ask my name; and as I am probably unknown by personal appearance—at least to a majority of those present—I will state that I am Rachel Meadows, and that I appear here to-night as the advocate of woman's rights."

"But, my dear madam," interrupted the chairman, "this is a meeting called for an entirely different purpose; and however much some of us may be in favor of extending woman's influence and power in political matters, this is not the place in which to air our views."

"I understand," replied the lady, "that this meeting was called for the purpose of advocating the election of Mr. Geoffrey Moultrie to Congress, and for placing his claims to that honor before the people. As it is likely that the subject of woman's rights and disabilities will be introduced into Congress at its next session, I think it desirable that we should know how Mr. Moultrie stands on the question. It is true that we have no votes, but I think we have influence, and we propose to use it henceforth in order to obtain for the educated, intelligent, quick-minded women of America what you give to every ignorant foreigner who comes to your shores. I had proposed putting my interrogatories to you, Mr. Chairman; but as the candidate is now present, we hope to hear from him. I have only to add that I am the spokeswoman of the Committee of the 'United Women of

America,' and that we are sent here by that large and influential organization."

"But, madam," rejoined the chairman, "the question is not an issue of the present campaign, and—"

"If the chairman will excuse me," said Moultrie, rising and coming forward, "I will say that I hope the lady may be allowed to proceed, and that I will endeavor to answer any questions that may possibly bear a relation to my course as a member of Congress, should you see fit to send me to represent you in that body."

Up to this time the vast assemblage had preserved so complete a degree of quiet, that, to use an exaggerated but familiar expression, "a pin might have been heard to drop." It was evident, however, that very great interest was felt in this episode, and certainly that there was no feeling against the lady who wished to be heard. This was rendered still more apparent by the applause which greeted Moultrie's remarks. Everybody therefore waited with eagerness for what was next to come. The chairman turned to the lady, who had remained standing while Moultrie was speaking, and she resumed her remarks.

Miss Rachel Meadows was not unknown to the reading or the listening public of the United States, for she had for several years written for the magazines and for the newspaper press many trenchant articles on the woman question, and had spoken to a like effect from the lecture-platform in various parts of the country. Although on the present occasion she had maintained her position with firmness and dignity, it was evident from the slight flush that mantled her handsome face and the slight nervous motions of her hands that she felt a little out of place before an audience composed entirely of men.

She did not look as though she were over twenty-five years of age, and her manners and speech were those of an educated woman accustomed to associating with people of refinement. She was not sufficiently advanced in years to warrant the designation of "old maid." Neither was she deficient in those personal attractions, the want of which, and the consequent inability to get a husband, are popularly supposed to be the chief characteristics of the agitators for the extension of woman's rights and privileges to an equality with those possessed by man.

She was, perhaps, a little over the medium height of women, and she was dressed plainly and yet in the perfection of neatness. Her hands were properly gloved and her feet nicely shod. As to her face, it was healthy looking; her features were not large enough to be remarked for their size, or so small as to give the idea of insignificance, and it was full of expression of the kind that one likes to see on a woman's face. There was nothing hard about it; the lines were not drawn rigidly; the contours were graceful and flowing; and as she stood there, calm and self-possessed, waiting patiently for the decision as to whether she should or should not be allowed to speak, and exhibiting just enough emotional disturbance to show that she was a woman, the sympathy of the audience went with her, and one strong point was gained before she had begun to state her case.

"I am much obliged to you," she said, addressing Moultrie, who had remained standing, "for coming to my aid, but it is no more than I expected from the husband of a woman who has shown the world that a love for science is not incompatible with filial and wifely duty. But it is not much that I have to say, and it is not my intention to advance any arguments in support of doc-

trines which are very dear to many women—for we think the future happiness of our sex depends greatly upon their establishment—but with which, and with what can be said in their favor, it may safely be assumed that you are fully acquainted. I merely desire to ask two questions, and then, whatever may be your answers, I shall have no more to say :

“First, I understand that a bill will be introduced into the next Congress providing that no public land shall hereafter be devoted to any college, university, or other institution of learning that makes any discrimination between the sexes in its courses of instruction.

“Second, an attempt will be made to allow women to vote and to hold offices in the District of Columbia and in all Territories belonging to the United States.

“I desire to know, on behalf of the committee of the ‘United Women of America,’ whether, in the event of your election to Congress, you will support these measures?”

She spoke with perfect ease and with a clear and distinct voice, which was heard in every part of the large room, and which was, moreover, what Moultrie specially admired, soft and melodious, without a shrill note or piercing tone in any of its inflections.

When she sat down there was a murmur of applause throughout the hall, subdued, it is true, but none the less expressive of the sympathy, if not the entire approval, of the audience. It appeared as though the strong men present were loath, while desirous of showing their respect for the speaker, to let out their full strength in the way of signifying their appreciation, under the apprehension that to do so would be an act of discourtesy to a woman.

“I am very glad,” said Moultrie, “to have the opportunity of saying a few words upon what may be called the ‘woman question,’ and I may at the outset of my remarks state that I am in favor of every woman in this and every other land being allowed all possible facilities for studying any subject in science, literature, or art that she chooses, and of getting her living in any honorable way she may select. These are her rights as a human being, of which no man, or body of men, should have the power to deprive her. I will also state—and to this view I have recently become a convert—that I think no one has any right to object to her seeking her education wherever she thinks she can get it best. If she wishes to go to Harvard, or Yale, or Columbia, or any other seat of learning from which she is now excluded, I think she ought to be allowed to go, provided she has arrived at years of discretion, and is hence presumably competent to decide for herself. But I am free to say that in my opinion the co-education of the sexes is inexpedient; at least now, when the details of plans to be followed have not been sufficiently considered, and while the world is, as it were, unprepared for the innovation. I feel, however, that I have no right to stand in the way of any woman who thinks differently, except in the matter of giving my advice.

“Relative to the specific question put to me, I have to say that I should certainly vote against the proposed bill, and for the reason that it would be of no practical benefit. It would simply be declaratory, and would not be of the slightest binding force on any subsequent Congress having the disposition of the public lands.

“In regard to the second measure: while I doubt the expediency of conferring the franchise and the right to

hold any State office upon women, I am in favor of giving them both privileges, when I am satisfied that they really desire them. If the 'United Women of America' can convince me that they actually represent their sex in this country, and especially the women of the District of Columbia and of the Territories, I will vote for the proposed bill with great pleasure."

He sat down amid the most tremendous applause, and then, after the transaction of a little routine business, such as the appointment of committees to watch the polls and to bring out the infirm or aged voters, the meeting was adjourned.

"They'll use all their influence against you," said the Hon. Tom Burton to Moultrie, as they walked up Fifth Avenue, arm in arm, on their way to the latter's residence, to smoke a cigar and have a little quiet talk. "There are perhaps fifty men in the district who are in strong sympathy with them, and who, of course, will now be dead against you, and they can probably control as many more for the asking—men who don't care a sixpence one way or another, and who will vote just as somebody they like tells them. Fancy being visited by Miss Rachel Meadows and asked to vote for Marcus Aurelius Jackson, or Titus Andronicus O'Leary, or whoever the other fellow may be! By George! I'm afraid I should give in myself, strong as I am in the faith."

He laughed pleasantly as he spoke, and without giving Moultrie time to interpose a word went on:

"You might have been a little less decided with them. You ought to have let off a few theoretical abstractions relative to lovely woman and the important place she occupies in the 'Grand Arcanum of Nature.' I don't know what the 'Grand Arcanum of Nature' is, but I

use it a great deal in Texas, and it always tells. I suppose, from first to last, I've got as many as a thousand votes by the judicious use of that expression. Then you ought to have made more reference to the intelligence of the committee, and especially of the spokeswoman, and have piled on the compliments to them and the whole sex, and have ended by declaring that when you gave a vote against the interests of the sex to which your mother, your sister, your wife, your daughter, belonged, might your tongue cleave to the roof of your mouth. Oh, if I had had the answering of those questions I wouldn't have committed you one iota; I'd have had all the ladies in a good humor, and they'd have gone away convinced that you were sound on the woman question! Consequently, you would have had a hundred more votes than you will have. You will probably be able to do without them, but you are no politician."

Moultrie laughed. "I am afraid you are right," he said, "and that I never will be able to refrain from speaking exactly as I feel. But I think you overlook another side of the question, that which relates to those men who would have been disgusted with any shilly-shallying on a matter of great importance, and who would have voted against me if I had attempted a befogging process, but who now will support me."

"There may be something in that," remarked the Hon. Tom, reflectively, "but not much; you see, the millennium hasn't come yet, and when it does it won't show itself first in politics. For the present, therefore, when you are cornered, as you were to-night, 'glittering generalities' are the things to use. They always excite enthusiasm, and make all feel that you are their friend. But, by Jove! Miss Rachel Meadows is a stun-

ner. Did you notice her eyes, and her glorious mouth, with its two rows of pearls? And her pretty little hands and feet? A pretty foot gets me."

"You certainly seem to be 'got,'" said Moultrie, with a laugh. "I shouldn't be surprised to find you erealong among the most strenuous supporters of 'woman's rights.' I've known of Miss Meadows for some time, but never had the pleasure of seeing her until to-night."

"I've seen her before. I heard her lecture in Galveston last winter for two hours on a stretch, and when she got through I was the only one left in the room; for, you see, we don't believe much down our way in what you call 'woman's rights.' Our women have all the rights they want, and they seem to be not altogether dissatisfied with their position."


"That's what their 'advanced' sisters would call the 'supineness of their slavery.' There's a good deal in the question, however, and my mind is still unsettled in regard to several of the more important points involved. I shall give a great deal of attention to them soon, and try to arrive at more definite conclusions."

"I'm thinking much more of Rachel Meadows than I am of her doctrines," said Burton. "The poor girl was awfully cut up as she saw one after the other of the audience slipping out; but she went through to the end, and seemed a little relieved when I complimented her on the strength of her arguments and on her courage. I offered to escort her to the hotel, which was only across the street, but she had her maid with her, and she declined with thanks. I never saw her again till to-night. I don't think she recognized me, for since then, as I always do when I come to your arctic regions, I have allowed my full beard to grow."

“ Why did you not make yourself known to her ? ”

“ Because, my dear fellow, I’m afraid of her. I’m half in love with her already, but I wouldn’t marry her for the world, or any other woman holding the views of the relations of the sexes that she holds. She knows too much for me, or at least thinks she does. I steer clear of intellectual women.”

Moultrie did not tell his companion that he himself had married a woman who had “ dissected all animals, from a man to a caterpillar,” had performed experiments in evolution and on the velocity of the nerve-force, had lectured to large assemblies, and held advanced views in regard to the education of women. He would have mentioned these facts had there been opportunity ; but they had just then arrived at the door of his house, and Burton, announcing that as it was late he would not go in, lighted his cigar, and strolled down the avenue to his hotel.



CHAPTER IV.

MISS BREMEN SPEAKS.

RACHEL MEADOWS and her five companions, members of the committee of the "United Women of America," left the meeting feeling that for the time they had been defeated, and yet none the less determined to maintain an undismayed attitude, and to persevere in their efforts toward reform. Two carriages were in waiting for them, and they drove rapidly to Rachel's rooms in the "Joan of Arc," an apartment house, well and handsomely built, and situated in one of the up-town streets between Fifth and Sixth avenues. Here she lived, with her widowed mother, in comfort, almost in affluence, for the elder lady had an income of nearly three thousand dollars a year, and the daughter, by her pen and her lectures, had no difficulty in adding more than as much again to the common fund.

The six ladies entered the "Joan of Arc," and were soon comfortably seated in Rachel's snug and artistically furnished parlor, which at the same time served as library and writing-room. During the drive nothing had been said in regard to the repulse they had encountered, for there could be no thorough interchange of condolences and indignation while the committee was divided into two equal parts in the two carriages. But now that there was reunion, each one, with the exception of Rachel, was loud in her denunciations of Moultrie,

and in the expression of her determination to do all in her power to prevent his being elected to Congress.

“To think,” said Mrs. Cross, who had been divorced from two husbands, and was living rather uncomfortably with the third, but who was a pretty, young woman, scarcely older than Rachel—“to think that a man owing, as does Mr. Moultrie, whatever position he has to his wife, who really is intelligent and highly educated, should dare to treat us in that contemptuous manner, just as if we were a lot of children with undeveloped brains !”

“I am afraid he is very narrow-minded and very ignorant,” observed Miss Richardson, a maiden lady of thirty-five, with literary and artistic aspirations. “He evidently does not know that more than a thousand years ago ladies sat in the English Parliament ; that even during the reign of William the Conqueror women voted and served their country in the Commons, and that peeresses sat, in their own right, in the House of Lords. I think I can control six votes, and every one shall be cast for Jackson.”

“His ignorance and impertinence are more pronounced than I have ever before seen, even in a man,” exclaimed Miss Billy Bremen, an excitable young lady of a little over twenty years of age, but who had some prominence in the “United Women of America,” due to the fact that her father, a wealthy butcher, had, when he died, two years before, left her half a million of dollars in United States bonds, besides the proprietorship of his butchering establishment, from which she derived an income of over twenty thousand a year.

Her father, an honest German, had arrived in the country when Billy was still an infant in arms. He was

called Johann Schmidt ; but when asked by an official his name on landing, he, thinking he was required to tell where he had sailed from, answered " Bremen," and he afterward found it so very inconvenient to get rid of the designation that he concluded to adopt it.

His daughter had been christened Billigheim, from the little hamlet in which she was born ; but this name, having been found impracticable both at home and among her school companions, it had been shortened to Billy, and she was never called by any other appellation.

Miss Billy was a stout, fair-skinned, fair-haired, and blue-eyed young woman, whose broad, fat, and commonplace face was good-humored enough so long as nothing occurred to disturb her equanimity. But when crossed, even in matters of the slightest, or even of no importance, it became purple in color, and her small, expressionless eyes started forward through their little slits, and looked as though they were about to pop out of her head. The doctor had warned her that she must not expose herself to situations in which there was any liability to the excitation of anger or of other strong and suddenly-produced emotion, as he was afraid an epileptic paroxysm might some day be produced. But she had persisted in running all risks of the kind, and thus far no serious trouble had been produced.

She had received a tolerably fair education, so far as mere schools could give it, but her mind was thoroughly untrained to habits of serious thought, and was, moreover, small, mean, and malicious in all its impulses.

Her views on the " woman question" were, however, more advanced than those of any other member of the committee, though why she had ever been drawn into the movement no one knew. She had first appeared on the

scene with a large subscription, and that had been sufficient to pave her way into the hearts of the chief members of the "United Women of America," and to bring her into notice as a reformer.

And she professed to hate the male sex, individually and collectively, with a hatred that nothing seemed competent to extinguish or lessen. Unfortunately, as she used to say, she could not get along without men ; but that was entirely owing to social prejudices that stood in the way of women doing certain kinds of work, and to the ignorance and the indolence that prevented them making attempts to supplant man. It is true that the efforts Miss Billy had made in this direction had terminated disastrously, and had to be abandoned after they had cost any amount of vexation and no small loss of money. Thus, she had hired a coachwoman ; but the first day she drove her mistress in a stylish coupé, with one big gray horse, she knocked down and ran over a little hunchback boy just in front of the Fifth Avenue Hotel, and Miss Billy was mulcted in damages to the extent of five thousand dollars, besides the costs of suit and lawyer's fees, footing up a grand total of eight thousand two hundred and seventeen dollars and sixty-three cents.

Then she had dismissed the superintendent of her *abattoir*, a man who had served her father faithfully for many years, and had put in his place a big burly woman, with instructions to get rid gradually of all the men employed in killing and dressing the animals, and to replace them with women. For twenty-four hours the woman manager did very well ; but the next day was slaughtering day, when it became necessary to do some hard and rather disagreeable work, which, however, she thought she understood better than her subordinates. She inter-

ferred to such an extent that every hand employed in the establishment stopped work and walked off, leaving the manager in complete solitude, with forty beeves and as many more calves and sheep lying on the floor dead, but undressed, and, consequently, not ready for market. It was the middle of an exceedingly hot summer, and before other assistance could be obtained the whole had spoiled, entailing a direct loss of several thousand dollars, to say nothing of the injury done to her trade.

These had been expensive lessons, and had not been unheeded by Miss Billy, though she groaned inwardly and outwardly every day of her life at the futility of all her efforts to get along in the world without the aid of the sex she so much affected to despise.

From all of which the reader will perceive that Miss Billy Bremen was a young woman of strong parts, with a will of her own and with sufficient individuality to have convictions up to which she endeavored to live, though not entirely with the success she desired. She was not altogether honest in her way with the world—that is, she was disposed to be sly and to make an unfair use of any advantage that she might have obtained. She kept a corps of spies watching the men in her employ, and whose duty it was to report the slightest infringement of the regulations she had laid down. She did not stop here ; for the members of this inquisitorial body—all of whom were women—were instructed to carry their observations into the daily lives of her workmen, so that she had a more or less complete and accurate biography of every individual to whom she paid wages. The more men she had in her power, she thought, the more power she would have over the men.

“ His ignorance and impertinence are unbounded,”

she repeated. "I have had experience with many men, but he is the very worst."

No one answered this assertion, and Miss Billy, with her face the color of a cold buckwheat cake, relapsed into silence.

Dr. Sarah Brown, a spruce-looking little woman with snapping black eyes, thought an address should be printed and distributed to the public. But Mrs. Swift Forest, who kept a large millinery establishment on Sixth Avenue, declared that they would only waste their money by the proposed course, for that people would not read such documents. She was of the opinion that the plan that offered the best chance of bringing Moultrie around to their view was to interview his wife, and to try to secure her influence with him on their side.

All had now spoken but Rachel, and all looked toward her as though expecting an expression of views from one whom they regarded as, in some respects, their leader. But she did not appear to be desirous of saying anything on the subject. She was evidently thinking deeply of what had occurred, and had given very little attention to the indignant remarks that had fallen from the lips of the other members of the committee.

Miss Billy Bremen, however, was the most irrepressible of those present. She walked up and down the floor, swinging her fat hands and stamping her broad feet with an energy that gave an idea of the storm that was raging within. Finally she stopped immediately in front of where Rachel was sitting, and sticking her hands into the pockets of her jacket as far as they would go, while her face became the color of a pickled cabbage, began to talk, but in a voice so husky, and with such extreme rapidity, that it was difficult for Rachel to com-

prehend what she was saying. At last she succeeded, in a measure, in restraining her exuberance to such a degree that she could make herself understood.

"It was you he insulted, Miss Meadows!" she gasped. "I wonder how you can sit there looking as cool as a pickerel. It makes my blood boil to think of it. It was an outrage. To dare to tell us that we didn't know our own business! And you are going to stand all this?" she continued, looking fiercely at Rachel. "I thought you had more spirit."

"Don't speak to me in that way, please," said Rachel, calmly, "and don't stand in that manner before me. It is unpleasant, and not what I am accustomed to."

"Probably not," answered Miss Billy, in a sneering tone. "If you were, you would have acted to-night with more courage. No wonder we are oppressed when those who pretend to be our leaders show the white flag, and run as soon as the enemy comes in sight. I am ashamed of you! Yes, ashamed of you! For one single instant I wish I were a man."

"And if you were," rejoined Rachel, still with quiet composure, "what would you do?"

"What would I do? what would I do, Miss Meadows? I'll tell you what I would do," coming still closer, till she fairly stood over Rachel, and looking at her with fury in her eyes—"I'd beat you!" and as she hissed out these words she shook both fists in Rachel's face, as though she really were going to strike her.

Rachel rose to her feet, with an expression of superb dignity on her face and in her bearing, before which Miss Billy was fairly cowed. "Leave my house instantly," said the indignant woman, pointing to the door, as the impertinent little butcheress slunk behind the

portly form of Mrs. Cross, in the endeavor to escape the look of anger and scorn that flashed from Rachel's eyes. "Go," she continued, "at once, or I will call a policeman to take you out."

"Oh, Miss Meadows, please don't proceed to such an extreme measure!" exclaimed Miss Richardson, while the other ladies began adjusting their wraps, preparatory to getting out of the way. "Remember that the good name of the 'United Women of America' is at stake. If this most unfortunate incident should get into the newspapers—as it will if you call a policeman—it will ruin us in the estimation of the public. Come, Miss Bremen!" turning to Billy, who had not yet gotten over her fright at Rachel's majestic anger. "Come! I am going, and I will see you safely to your carriage."

Miss Billy thought she detected in the manner exhibited by Miss Richardson and the other ladies some indications of a certain amount of sympathy with her in her attack on Rachel. She was an obstinate little wretch when her blood was up, and she thought she was safe. She had long felt that Rachel failed to treat her with the deference which she thought was due to her wealth and her position as a woman of business, and she concluded, while Miss Richardson was speaking, that she would never have a better opportunity than the present to vent her spite, surrounded, as she imagined herself to be, by sympathizing friends. The threat of the police did not disturb her when she had had a little time to collect her thoughts, for she knew enough of those guardians of the public peace in the city of New York to be aware of the fact that when sent for it would be at least half an hour before one of them could make his appearance, and long before that time had expired she would have accom-

plished her object, and have been on her way to her residence in East Seventy-fifth Street.

“ You needn’t trouble yourself about the policeman, Miss Meadows,” she said, as soon as Miss Richardson had ceased speaking, and Rachel had just put her finger on the little button of the electric bell in order to summon a servant. “ I’ve only a word to say, and then I’ll go with these ladies, my friends,” she added, waving her pudgy right hand so as to embrace them all in its sweep. “ A pretty woman you are to set yourself up as a reformer. I know why you took that Mr. Moultrie’s answer so quietly, and why you did not dare reply to him. You’re in love with him ; that’s what you are,” she continued, growing bolder with the sound of her own words, and again advancing toward Rachel and shaking her fist in her face. “ I could see it all the time he was speaking. You ! in love with a married man ! I’ll ruin him ; I’ve got a hold on him that he little suspects. He’ll never be elected ! And if ever you dare to talk about me I’ll tell the whole world that you’re in love with him. Yes ! and what’s more, I’ll tell his wife. Come, ladies, let us leave this model reformer to think of her lover !”

Long before Miss Billy had finished this abusive harangue Rachel had sunk into a chair, completely overwhelmed by the force and volubility with which each successive malicious falsehood was uttered. She was helpless ; she could no more have pressed the little button that set the electric bell in motion than she could have flown. She could only lie back in her chair with her eyes half closed, waiting, with a painful sense of constriction in her throat that almost suffocated her, for this horrible woman to end her tirade and get out of her presence. But Miss Billy was not done yet. She had

adjusted her outside clothing to suit herself, though in her agitation and excitement she had gotten several of her "things" awry. She stood by the door, surrounded by Mrs. Cross, Mrs. Dr. Sarah Brown, and Mrs. Swift Forest, who formed a sort of bodyguard for her protection in case an assault should be made, when suddenly she rushed past them, and again stood over Rachel, looking down at her with an expression of the most intense vindictiveness on her flat, vulgar face.

"I've got him under my thumb, I want you to know, miss. Yes, under my very thumb!" putting, as she spoke, the thumb of her right hand into her left palm, and grinding the two surfaces together as a glazier does when he has a piece of putty between them, "and I mean to crush him, too," she continued, sticking both hands close to Rachel's face, "just like that!" giving an extra degree of strength to the operation, so that it really looked as though she would either wriggle her thumb out of joint, or bore a hole in her palm. "Now I'm going, and I never mean to darken your doors again;" with which statement—the only pleasant one poor Rachel had heard her make—she darted from the room, followed closely by her three sympathizing friends, and leaving Miss Richardson alone with Rachel.

"Don't mind her, dear," said Miss Richardson, kneeling beside the poor girl and putting her arms around her. "She is a vulgar little beast at best, but I think she is mad—stark, staring mad. And I think the other three are as bad as she, if not worse, for they have been brought up with some pretensions to gentility, whereas she was almost born in the slaughter-house, and has lived in it all her life."

"I can't conceive why she should treat me in this

outrageous manner," said Rachel, with a little nervous shiver at the idea of what she had just gone through. "I scarcely know her—have never, in fact, met her except at our meetings."

"Perhaps you have slighted her in some way or other, and she has been waiting her chance to be even with you. Or perhaps she is herself in love with Mr. Moultrie."

"Oh, no ; impossible !" exclaimed Rachel. "He is a married man. She certainly knows that."

"I don't think that would be an insuperable obstacle in the estimation of a woman as low-minded as this Billy Bremen. Think of her friend, Mrs. Cross, who fell in love with her present husband while she was still Mrs. Russel, and while Mr. Russel was living, and Mr. Cross was happy in the possession of one wife. Two divorces were necessary there, but they were procured without difficulty. Here only one would be required. Depend upon it, my dear, there is some such notion in the Bremen girl's mind."

"It serves one right for associating with such people, even in the way of business only. Mamma warned me against them ; but I thought that if I kept aloof from them socially, it made no difference whom I knew in the committee-rooms or at the meetings. But I see I was wrong."

"Yes, I think you were. That is one point in which there is a difference between the ways in which the two sexes are able to manage such things. Men can and do associate with all kinds of people in their business, with whom they never become intimate in any other relation, and whom they would never think of inviting to their houses. But women seem to be incapable of any such

restricted intercourse. They never know where to draw the line."

"Some of them do," said Rachel, with a faint attempt at a smile. "My mother is one. She would buy her meat from Miss Billy for years, and never recognize her outside of her butcher-shop."

"Talking of a shop," observed Miss Richardson, with a little laugh and an accent that were not altogether free from a tinge of vindictiveness; "I was in there the other morning, and she was present, dressed in a suit of green velvet and wearing solitaire diamond earrings as big as filberts. Think of diamonds and velvet at ten o'clock in the morning!"

"Amelia!" exclaimed Rachel, with sudden energy, "I am sick of the whole matter. I really begin to think that we have been striving to overthrow the laws of God. We are not the equals of men, and we are meaner in our ways of thinking and acting. No man would have conducted himself as did that fearful woman."

"Now, my dear child, don't, for Heaven's sake, judge the whole sex by that little ugly beast! I shall never call her by any other name hereafter than the 'Beast.' Are you going to sacrifice great principles, upon which your mind has so long been fixed approvingly, because you are disgusted and outraged at the horrible conduct of one low woman? You say no man could have acted as she did. My dear, there are mean women and mean men, and I have seen some of the latter to whom Miss Billy would be a paragon of decency and magnanimity."

"I begin to think that magnanimity is impossible in women."

"I don't know," said Miss Richardson, reflectively;

“perhaps it is in its grandest sense. You see, women are deficient in physical force, and they are hence obliged to resort to more or less *finesse* in order to accomplish their ends. I admit that such a scene as the one we have just gone through would have been almost impossible between men. Before the ‘Beast’ had gotten half way through with her vituperation she would, had she and you been men, have been flying out of the window or lying prostrate on the floor from a well-directed blow of your fist. No, no; you must not give up the great struggle for the right merely because there are some unworthy women. I cannot conceive of anything more illogical. Even your mother, prejudiced as she is against us, will tell you that.”

“I suppose you are right,” said Rachel, wearily, “but there are times when I feel terribly discouraged. I see so many women with little, mean, contemptible traits that I am often disgusted with my sex. How seldom is it that you find a woman who is not jealous, and suspicious, and envious of all other women who come in her way, and then how unforgiving to those of their own sex who have strayed from the paths of virtue! How pitiless they can be at such times, and yet how smiling and kind to the very men who have led their weak sisters astray!”

“That is true, and it is right that it should be so. Women must ever be the guardians of the purity of their own sex, and must visit with social ostracism all those who violate the laws that society has established. There is no other punishment but such as they can inflict, and it is right that the woman who falls, though she should never, of course, be treated unkindly, should be made to feel that she has done that which saps at the

very root of the honor of society, and which, though not punishable by the laws of the land, is nevertheless to be mercilessly condemned by a still higher court—that of her own sex. I suppose there is scarcely a woman who has, through her misconduct, lost her place in society who would not gladly suffer ten years' imprisonment in the penitentiary at hard labor, if that would be accepted as sufficient atonement, and she be reinstated to the position from which she has fallen. There are crimes that we women never pardon ; at least, never to the extent of receiving the offender back as the fit associate of our husbands and brothers, our daughters or sisters.

“ Then you must remember, my dear,” she went on, after a pause, during which she seemed to be arranging her thoughts so as to make them most effective, “ that the worst traits in women have been caused by man’s tyranny, and have been developed through his continued refusal to give her an equal opportunity with him in the race of life. You are judging her now by man’s standard, and not by her own. Whole classes of animals have cunning implanted in them from the necessities of the situation in which they have been placed. You don’t condemn a fox for being sharp-witted, nor the opossum for feigning death in order to deceive his enemies. Probably among foxes and opossums those that are the greatest adepts at catching chickens with impunity and fooling their captors stand highest in vulpine and didelphic sociology. Doubtless the inherent tendency to fraud existing in these animals might be eradicated by careful training and kindness continued throughout many generations, just as woman will be improved in the years to come by like treatment.”

“ I never heard such doctrines as these in all my life !”

exclaimed Rachel. "They seem to me to be horrible."

"They are based on natural laws. What right has man to expect us to be frank, and magnanimous, and chivalric, when we are treated like slaves—petted slaves, perhaps, under the best circumstances, but none the less as slaves? Slavery always makes its victims deceitful, and incites them to defend themselves and to seek to accomplish their ends secretly and without regard to magnanimity. Chivalry was shown by the knights and feudal lords, not by the vassals. Well, my dear, men are now the lords, and we are the vassals."

Miss Richardson had risen while making this little speech, and had begun walking up and down the floor, as though she were on the lecture platform, where she always walked from one end to the other while delivering her lecture. As she concluded she came nearer to Rachel, who had remained in her chair. "I like you," she said, "because you are refined and gentle, and because, in many respects, you are different from any other woman I ever saw. Shall I tell you a secret? Yes? Well, I will. As a rule, I hate women, although I am always fighting their battles. They are entitled to justice, but that is no reason why I should love them; and I don't. I have very few friends in the sex, but I should like to count you as one of them, and perhaps," she added, with an accent of timidity, "the dearest of them. Don't answer me now," she went on, seeing Rachel about to speak. "If you were to say you liked me, I shouldn't believe you, and if you were to repulse me, I should not like it. No; wait till you know me better."

"You are very honest and very true," said Rachel, much moved by Miss Richardson's frankness. "And—"

“No ; you shall not say a word,” putting her hand over Rachel’s mouth, and laughing a little hysterically, or at least nervously. “Yes,” she continued, “you shall. You shall tell me why you did not reply to Mr. Moultrie to-night. You should not really have allowed the matter to go so completely by default.”

“There was nothing to say. He had entirely demolished my case, and by a few words, which, however, showed that he knew what he was talking about. I felt disgusted with the matter and with the ignorance we had displayed. But then he was so gentlemanly and kind in his manner, that I felt almost compensated for my defeat, and I think he is a friend, though a just one, and not at all likely to be led away by sentiment to act against his convictions.”

“Ah ! you are, like all other women, willing to submit to be scratched by the lion’s claws if the balm be immediately applied. Man may keep you out of your rights ; but if he does so with a smile, and a kind word, and a deferential manner, you are satisfied. As to our ignorance, that is nothing. We can’t be expected to know much about statecraft and the ways of legislative bodies when we are carefully excluded from participation in either. Still, I think with you that Mr. Moultrie is better than the other candidates, and I shall use my influence for him, although I said differently just now. The right to change one’s mind has not yet been taken from us, thank God !”

“I am afraid,” said Rachel, “that you will have to do without me in the executive committee after this. I can never consent to be so placed that I shall be liable to meet that horrid girl again, or even the three women who have apparently decided with her. I shall at once

send in my resignation to the president, and I am more than half disposed to abandon the movement altogether.”

“No, no ; I will not hear of that. There are so few women in good society who are with us that we can’t afford to lose you. We’ll put the ‘Beast’ out. That will be better.”

“I shall resign,” repeated Rachel, with firmness. “That I have determined on fully. As to woman’s rights, I believe it is just as Mr. Moultrie said. We have no evidence that the majority of them want any more rights than they have. Look how many of our strongest adherents have left as soon as they were married, and how many women cease to work when their husbands are competent and willing to support them ! Those who are forced to labor for their daily bread, and who are struggling for new channels through which they can work, abandon the contest as soon as some strong man comes along and marries them. They have been fighting only for themselves, not for a principle. I would not trust myself—for I am a woman—and I have felt the yearning for some good man’s arms to which I could fly with a sense of perfect security and the consciousness that their owner would die for me if it were necessary. Yes, it must be very pleasant.”

“You are demoralized by that ‘Beast.’ To-morrow you will feel differently.”

“No, I think not. I have been gradually reaching my present convictions. We all act in that way. Look at Mrs. Moultrie ! Before her marriage she was devoted to science, and had studied and practised medicine ; she had dissected human bodies ; she had a physiological laboratory, and performed experiments ; she lectured to mixed audiences. That was all before she had met a

man whom she could love. At last he came, and the science, and the dissections, and the lectures vanished. I had occasion to write to her this afternoon, but I know what her answer will be."

"But you might have married had you so chosen?" said Miss Richardson, inquiringly.

"Yes, but not to a man I loved. That man I have not yet seen, so far as I know; but I am waiting for him, and when he comes and asks me, I shall marry him."

"An honest confession is good for the soul," exclaimed Miss Richardson, laughing heartily. "I suppose there are some women who are incapable of experiencing the emotion of love, and I think I am one of them. Certainly I have never yet seen the man to whom I would be willing to be tied for all my life, and to look up to as my guide and protector. Bah! it makes me sick to think of it. Thank Heaven, I can guide and protect myself! I want no man about me to growl when his coffee is too weak or too strong to suit his lordship's taste, and to tell me what I shall do or not do; whom I shall know or not know."

"You are as bad as Miss Bremen," said Rachel, laughing in turn.

"Billy Bremen; that little 'Beast'! Oh, she's only a fraud! She'd marry the man who knocks her oxen on the head or cuts her hogs' throats, if he asked her, and she couldn't do any better. Besides, I told you she is in love with Mr. Moultrie. I saw it in her face—so far as her puttyish features can show anything. I am not joking, and I think she means something by her threat of having him under her thumb."

"But what could she mean?"

"I have not the slightest idea; but that she thinks she

can injure him, I am quite sure. Of course she may be mistaken—I hope she is—but she was too self-satisfied to be lying. There was too much confidence in her own malice for that. However, I can't bear to talk about her, and I must go now. Don't mind her, and don't do anything rash in the way of dissolving your connection with the 'United Women of America.' ”

“ I shall certainly resign from the executive committee this very night,” said Rachel, with emphasis. “ Well, good-night,” she continued, “ if you will go, though I wish you would stay till mother comes home. She is dining to-night with the Hendersons, old friends of hers who have just returned from Europe. You must really go? Good-night !” kissing her friend as she spoke.

“ Don't mind that little 'Beast,' ” said Miss Richardson, in a whisper, as she stepped into the elevator just outside of Rachel's apartment. “ Keep your eye on her, but don't worry about her threats. She can't hurt *you*, at any rate.”

CHAPTER V.

MISS BILLY'S BOMBSHELL.

THE election was to take place in two days. Each of the three contending parties was ready, so far as active work was concerned, and there was not much doubt in the minds of the wise men that Moultrie would be elected by at least a thousand plurality. There was some little talk of the withdrawal of one of the other candidates, and negotiations had been initiated looking to that end ; but no agreement could be arrived at that was satisfactory to the rank and file, and neither of the rivals, when it came to the point, was willing to retire in favor of the other. It was quite certain, therefore, that there would be a triangular contest, and that the vote in opposition to Moultrie would be about equally divided.

Great interest had been taken by Theodora and Lalage in the meetings, addresses, and letters incident to a canvass of the kind in question. Every morning the newspapers were eagerly scanned for information of what had taken place the day before, and the discussions that occurred at the breakfast-table between Moultrie and his wife and daughter relative to past events and future movements were always incidents of great satisfaction to all concerned.

On the present occasion they were at breakfast in the pleasant little room devoted to the first meal of the day. Theodora was glancing over the *Morning Sentinel*, oc-

casionally stopping to take a sip of coffee or to cut a little segment from the lamb-chop on her plate. It was the morning after the meeting at which the Hon. Tom Burton had spoken, and at which Moultrie had so effectually demolished the committee of the "United Women of America." He had related the particulars to Theodora on his return home, but she saw them stated here from a somewhat different, though not unfriendly, standpoint, together with editorial comments of a character so flattering to her husband that her cheeks glowed with pride and pleasure. She looked smilingly at him as she handed the paper to Lalage to pass on to him.

"There !" she exclaimed ; " I suppose you are used to having pleasant things said of you nowadays ; but read that. It is calculated to make your ' breast swell with patriotic pride,' as the reporter says his does at the assertion that you are going to serve your country in the ' Halls of Congress.' "

Moultrie laughed as he took the paper from his daughter's hands. " It is only fair," he said, " that you should see what the other people say. Here is the *Daily Controller*, which is Mr. Jackson's organ, and here the *Avenger*, which occupies the like position with Mr. O'Leary. Read the first paragraph, Lal, of each of the leading editorials of those shining lights of journalism, and you will see what a wretched man you have for a husband and father. Read them aloud for your mamma's benefit. She is one-sided in her views now, and these may tend to straighten her."

Lal took the *Controller*, and read as follows :

" ' A more pitiable spectacle than that exhibited last night at the meeting held by the supporters of Mr.

Moultrie was never, we venture to say, seen by the people of this city. A committee of ladies representing that influential organization the "United Women of America" submitted two very simple questions to the candidate through Miss Rachel Meadows, whose eloquence has so frequently thrilled our readers. Instead of answering them in a manly, straightforward way, Mr. Moultrie hesitated and stammered, and finally ended his non-committal remarks by intimating that both questions were unnecessary, and that the ladies did not know what they wanted. Of course Mr. Moultrie has a right to his own opinions, or even to no opinions ; but that he should have gone out of his way to insult such eminently respectable ladies as those who favored him with their presence last evening was, we think, quite unpardonable, and will doubtless be resented by the husbands, fathers, brothers, and sons who will attend the polls on Wednesday next.' "

Theodora laughed a little constrainedly, and it was evident she was annoyed.

Lal's face flushed with anger. "The wretch!" she exclaimed. "I wonder how he dared to write such lies! If I were a man I would go to him with a whip, and I would beat him well."

Moultrie smiled at the effect upon the two women. "In Colorado," he said, "such language would be ample ground for shooting the editor on sight. Here, however, we find it better not to notice him. Now, my dear, let your mamma know what the *Avenger* thinks of me. I expect to see your blood fairly boil, and each individual hair of your heads stand on end, when you read the comments of the gentleman who conducts Mr. O'Leary's organ. This," putting his finger on a certain

paragraph, "seems to embody a little more venom than any other passage. Read it, Lal."

"There have been quibblers and equivocators, not to use stronger expressions, before Mr. Geoffrey Moultrie appeared upon this sublunary sphere; but probably the Goddess of Truth never blushed more deeply for a human being trying to wriggle himself out of a false position than she did for that individual last night. It was a humiliating scene for that sex that arrogates to itself all the honor and all the intelligence, to see the free-trade candidate squirm under the pitiless logic of Miss Rachel Meadows. The lady was calm, but implacable, and her questions went right to the point with a directness that left nothing to be desired—by every one, that is, but Mr. Geoffrey Moultrie. He looked as if he wished the ground would open at his feet and engulf him forever from the scornful looks that the indignant lady gave him. We need not remind our readers how different would have been the conduct of Titus Andronicus O'Leary under like circumstances.'"

"It is a shame," said Lal, the tears starting to her eyes, "that a gentleman should be attacked in that outrageous way. You do not mind it, father, do you?" she continued, putting her arms around his neck and laying her face against his.

"My dear, I mind it no more than I would a few flakes of snow falling on my seal-skin coat."

"But I really think, Geoffrey," said Theodora, "that this person goes too far. Something ought to be done to restrain such unbridled vituperation."

"But what can be done? Of course it is not worth while to quarrel with such people. And then you must remember that these papers are very low specimens of

the press of New York. You would not find such journals as the *Oracle*, the *Citizen*, the *Annunciator*, and half a dozen others I could name indulging in drivel like that. The only thing to do is to laugh at them if you can, and to bear in mind that every American who 'runs' for an office takes his reputation in his hand."

"I hope mother will not see these papers," said Theodora, trying to raise a smile. "She would be sure to tell you that it was just what you had every reason to expect, and just what she told you; but she would, at the same time, be greatly grieved to know that her son was spoken of so scandalously."

"Yes," laughed Moultrie, "she would be very indignant and very self-satisfied; but the indignation would predominate and continue, while the self-satisfaction would die out as soon as she had uttered 'I told you so.' But, my dear, get the *Controller* and the *Avenger* out of your mind, for really what they say is of no consequence in my estimation. Shall I have you with me this afternoon in the Park? What do you say, you and Lal, to going out to Jerome Park to dinner? There are no races to-day, but the *cuisine* is quite good now, Burton tells me."

"I should like it very much," answered Theodora.

"And you, Lal? Can you get off from your studies in time?"

"Oh, yes; I shall be through by five o'clock; I have no music lesson to-day, and I shall be glad to go."

"Then good-by," continued Moultrie, kissing them both. "Don't worry over the *Controller* and the *Avenger*. You'd make short work of these editors, Lal," he went on, stroking her hair and smiling lovingly as he looked at her. "You'd be more than a match for

either of them, for they are both puny little fellows."

"I think I would like to kill them both," said Lal, indignantly.

"Yes," he answered, "you look as though you were quite capable of doing it, too."

"I have not felt so angry since I came East. I often used to talk of killing people when I lived in Colorado, before—before you came," she went on, throwing her arms around his neck as she spoke. "It is wrong, I know, to say such things, and you will forgive me, will you not, dear father?"

"I don't think that will be very difficult," he answered, kissing her forehead. "By the by, Theodora," he continued, turning to his wife, who stood by his side, "we must try and get Lal into a more colloquial way of talking, though I must confess I like her formal manner of expressing herself. It seems to me very pretty and very quaint."

"Then if you like it I will never change!" exclaimed Lal.

"But it sounds so foreign, my dear," said Theodora. "No one says 'I do not,' 'I will not,' 'I cannot,' and so on in ordinary conversation; but they say 'I don't,' 'I won't,' 'I can't,' and use other contracted forms. Still, I think with your father that it is rather pretty, and certainly no one can find fault with it on the score of incorrectness. You have done so much, dear, in the time you have been with us, that I think we ought to let you alone with your speech."

"You shall talk just as you please," said Moultrie, as he left the room. "She has done wonders," he thought to himself, as he put on his overcoat. "No one but an

American could have gotten rid of a dialect in so short a time, and some people—the Scotch and English, for example—never part with their peculiarities of early speech, though they try ever so hard. I have heard lord-mayors and baronets—yes, even peers—who dropped their *hs* after fifty years' intercourse with genteel society ; and where is the provincial Englishman or Scotchman who ever gives up the accent or pronunciation of his youth ? An American, however, loses all his local peculiarities whenever he sets to work deliberately to do so, and Lal has scarcely one left, after only two years' efforts. She has worked faithfully and intelligently, and when Tyscovus comes for her she will be a wife of whom he will never have cause to be ashamed. But how can I ever let her go ?”

He had asked himself this question at least a hundred times during the last year, and had never given it a satisfactory answer. He could not bear to contemplate the inevitable day which, little by little, came nearer—that day on which his friend would appear to take her away from him forever, and on which she would go with one she loved better than she loved him. There was a pang at the thought that cut him to the very heart. He sighed deeply as he left the house on his walk downtown to his office. It was his way of taking active exercise, and he never neglected this walk, no matter what kind of weather he had to contend with. To-day he assumed a quick pace, for he had work to do, and he was a little behind his usual time.

Meanwhile Theodora and Lalage went about their usual morning's work.

The course of instruction that Moultrie and Theodora had laid out for Lalage was based upon as much good

common-sense as is usually possessed by men and women. They recognized the fact that when she came under their charge she was almost entirely ignorant of the very rudiments of learning. She could read imperfectly, could write a little, and knew something of the elementary rules of arithmetic, and this was all. She had never received any instruction, but had taught herself the little she knew. But they saw that she was remarkably quick of apprehension, and that her brain worked easily and smoothly. They perceived that her mind was a remarkably well-balanced one, and that she was not a girl to take eccentric notions, and to form an overwhelming idea of her own competence to direct herself in the roads to the acquisition of learning. She had, in fact, that best of all ground-work upon which education can be built—a knowledge of her own ignorance, and a willingness to be guided by others. There were but two years more that she would be under their care, and then she would go to Tyscovus as his wife. What was to be done, therefore, must be done quickly, and every circumstance capable of influencing the result must be brought into action.

There was no faltering on her part. Her whole soul was wrapped up in her work. The pleasures of society were eschewed. She went to no theatres or other places of amusement, beyond an occasional concert; not because of the time they occupied, but because they diverted her mind from pursuits that would in the end be of more advantage to her. In this, perhaps, she was not altogether wise; but as she then felt, amusements of the kind in question would really have been no amusement to her. She would have been reproaching herself continually with the idea that every moment spent in them was lost time.

But she did not neglect the needs of her body while laboring so diligently to improve her mind. She walked or rode horseback for an hour every morning before taking any other breakfast than a cup of coffee and a piece of dry toast, and usually drove in the Park with her father and mother for a little period every afternoon. She thus not only strengthened her physical system, but incidentally provided for mental diversion. Of a mild kind, it is true, yet powerful enough to allow her brain to recuperate and start off with more than its usual vigor when she again set it to doing the special work laid out for it.

There were no chemistry, philosophy, physiology, French, German, or other higher branch of knowledge, so much affected by young women of the present day, who cannot write ten lines correctly, and who are hopelessly ignorant of the history and geography of their own country. Her education was conducted on an entirely different basis from that of Florence Sincote, and her teacher was not a man, but a woman who had been brought up amid refined surroundings, and who had no high-flown notions about the identity of the sexes and the consequent necessity of forcing a young woman's mind to take the same course as that of a boy destined to be a civil or mechanical engineer. She was taught to spell and to read correctly. Grammar was given her by practical examples, not by books. No one, her father and mother knew, ever yet learned to speak good English from studying books on grammar. When she spoke, if she spoke incorrectly she was at once set right, but never unless she was at the time receiving instruction. Upon this point Moultrie was very decided. "If we correct her," he had said, "every time she opens her

mouth to speak and makes a mistake, her life will be a burden to her, and ours to us." Often he and Theodora conversed with her relative to her work of the day, and after dinner he always gave her a "talk," as he called it, on American history, or described the various cities and countries he had visited, or related the adventures he had had. She was encouraged to ask questions and to express her opinions upon all subjects that were discussed in her presence.

Geography and the physics of the universe, so far as they could be taught without infringing on the domain of the higher mathematics, were among the most thoroughly considered of all her studies. Books of travel contributed to her assistance, and the reading of them gave her the familiarity with the English language in its best forms, which it was desirable she should possess. Then the indoctrination of the first principles of numbers almost completed the work that her own teacher, Mrs. Bowdoin, a widow, had to do. It was not much all told, but what there was of it was well and thoroughly done. And there was one thing more—music—and to that an hour in the morning was given. She had a full, rich and sympathetic contralto voice and a correct ear. Her progress in this direction had been marvellous, so much so that Mr. Ricci, her teacher, declared that she was almost, if not altogether, a musical genius.

This morning she went into a little apartment adjoining her bedroom, that had been specially fitted up as a sitting-room for her, and in which she received her teacher. It was not large, but it was the embodiment of everything that could contribute to her convenience and comfort. In a few minutes Mrs. Bowdoin arrived, and then, with an intermission of half an hour, at one

o'clock, for luncheon they would be hard at work together till three. After that there was no more teaching of that kind for the day. Theodora had gone about her household duties, which always took an hour every morning, and was engaged with the housekeeper when a servant announced that a lady was waiting in the reception-room.

"Is she a visitor?" inquired Theodora, quite satisfied that it was too early in the morning for any but a business visit, unless from one of her intimate friends, who might call unceremoniously.

"No, madame," said François, who was acquainted with Theodora's visiting-list almost as well as she was herself; "I zink see came on beesness."

"Then ask her to please send me her name, and to let me know what she wishes."

"Yes, madame."

In a few moments François was back.

"See zay, madame, zat madame would not know ze name, and zat her beesness is wit madame *seule* onlee; very important."

"Does she look like a lady?"

François shrugged his shoulders. "See come in a carriage, see veer ze fine clothes; mais, but lady! Ah madame! madame vill know."

"I suppose I shall have to leave you for a few minutes," said Theodora to the housekeeper. "None of us will be home to dinner to-day, but Miss Lalage and I will take a cup of tea at four o'clock. Show her into the library, François," she continued; "I will see her in a moment."

She followed the man so speedily that the visitor had scarcely time to be seated before Theodora was in the

room. "You wish to see me on business?" she inquired, with just that amount of *hauteur* that would have been sufficient to keep a well-bred woman at a proper distance, and without again asking the name of her visitor.

"I do," with a tone of mingled superiority and indignation, that showed that whatever her business was, it was of such a character as to cause her to feel her power, and at the same time excite a corresponding amount of anger in her breast.

Then Theodora looked at her, an act which she had as yet scarcely done, except in a very general and superficial way. She saw before her a low, broad young woman, who looked, owing to the shortness of her legs, as though she might be taller as she sat down than when she stood up. She had a flat, wide face, somewhat Eskimoish in shape, and little washed-out blue eyes, that looked as expressionless—although she was inwardly torn with contending emotions—as though they were two leaden bullets. She was very much overdressed in light blue plush, and had large diamond earrings in her floppy ears, which appendages stood out like two big wings from the side of her head. Need it be said that she was our acquaintance of the night before, Miss Billy Bremen?

Theodora's first idea was that her visitor was some one desiring a subscription to a charitable object, or perhaps a book-agent. But one comprehensive glance, such as she knew as well how to give as any woman in the world, was sufficient to dispel this idea. She had never yet seen a book-agent with diamond earrings worth three or four thousand dollars, and her manner was altogether too self-assertive to be that of any one wanting a favor.

She felt a little amused at the woman's bearing, but she nevertheless had no time to waste upon her, and so determined to get rid of her as soon as possible.

"Perhaps you will be good enough to tell me what it is."

"Don't you want to know my name first, Mrs. Moultrie?"

"It is scarcely necessary, I think. I would rather, if you please, know your business."

"Very well! You'll know it soon enough, I guess. But I'll tell you my name, whether you want to hear it or not. I'm Miss Billy Bremen, the daughter of the late Johann Bremen, Esq., and I own the large *abattoir* at Locust Point."

Notwithstanding this insolent speech, delivered in Miss Billy's most majestic manner, with the usual accompaniment of a livid face, Theodora maintained her composure, and her visitor continued:

"You lived in Colorado once, I believe?"

"Yes."

"At a place called Hellbender?"

Theodora nodded.

"And not far from another place called The Cañon?"

Another nod.

"There were two gentlemen living there or near there named James Bosler and Luke Kittle?"

Theodora could not allow this form of the question to go unnoticed. "There were two persons there—highly disreputable characters—of those names," she answered.

"My information in regard to them," said Miss Billy, bridling up and becoming still more purplish in her complexion, "is very different—quite the reverse, I assure you—and I'm not in the habit of lying. I happen to

have a friend living at The Cañon, and I am told by him in a letter, which I got yesterday morning, that Mr. Bosler was a man of family, a dealer in horses, with a wife, a highly educated lady, and a daughter. The wife is dead, but the daughter is, I understand, still living." As she uttered these last words Miss Billy fixed her gaze on Theodora, as though she would pierce her through with her glittering eye; but the eye, or the pair of them, refused to glitter, and only a dull glare was the result.

"It is scarcely worth while, I think, to discuss the character of these men. They are nothing to me."

"Oh, you think so, do you? Well, we'll see about that further on. Do you know what became of them?"

"They were hanged for murder."

"According to law, I suppose, after due trial and conviction in a court of justice?"

Theodora could not help smiling at the turn the conversation was taking. Then suddenly the idea struck her that this woman might be a relative of one or both of the men whose names had thus been brought to her mind long after she had, as she thought, dismissed them from her memory, and a feeling of delicacy caused her to give a different answer from the one Miss Billy would otherwise have received. So she observed:

"There was not much law in the Territory at that time. They were hanged by the Vigilance Committee, after due inquiry into all the circumstances of the various charges against them. Of course it was not right, but the act was, I believe, approved by the people."

"Oh, you admit, then, that it was wrong! Well, Mrs. Moultrie, do you happen to know who were the

men on the Vigilance Committee that perpetrated those two murders ?”

“ I have not the slightest idea.”

“ You don’t know, then, who the leader was ?”

“ No.”

“ The man who commanded the party and who acted as judge condemning them to death ?”

“ I have not the slightest knowledge on the subject.”

“ I will tell you, then. But, first of all, I wish to say that I am a member of the committee of the ‘ United Women of America ’ so grossly insulted by your husband last night.”

“ My husband does not insult women, no matter who or what they may be.”

“ You used to be interested in the woman question, but you don’t seem to care for it now,” said Miss Billy, not noticing the denial.

“ We are not talking of my views. You accused my husband of insulting women, and I told you it was not true. I think this interview has gone quite far enough.”

“ There I beg leave to differ from you,” resumed Miss Billy, rising from the chair and approaching Theodora. “ You said just now that you did not know who was the leader that murdered those two poor gentlemen in cold blood. If you were telling me the truth you’ll be considerably astonished, I guess. It was your husband ! He hanged the one because he wanted the poor gentleman’s only daughter ; and he hanged the other, who was a prominent man and a candidate for the Legislature, because he had a friend he wanted elected, and he thought that would be a good way to make room for him. Now, Mrs. Moultrie, what do you think of that ?”

Before she had finished this speech Theodora had risen

to her feet and had rung the bell. But ere it could be answered Miss Billy had time to say a few additional words.

"Yes, it's true, every word of it, and I've had it type-written—the whole story—twelve copies, and tomorrow it will be published in every newspaper in the city of New York, and—"

"Show that woman to the door," interrupted Theodora, as François made his appearance; "and if she refuses to go, or attempts to enter the house again, summon a policeman." Then, without looking at Miss Billy, who continued to talk in such an excited manner that she was incoherent, she left the room, leaving her visitor the empty advantage of being mistress of the field.

For a moment Miss Billy was at a loss to determine whether she had or had not gained a victory. François stood in the doorway, waiting, with a marvellous degree of patience, to obey his orders, and she had very little time then for deliberation, even had she been in a frame of mind suitable for the operation of mental concentration and judgment. That her blow had produced some effect she could not fail to perceive, but that it was of the character she had expected was more doubtful. That, however, was a matter which time alone could fully determine. That she had Moultrie in her power she fully believed, and that she could defeat his election she felt quite sure. She began, however, to have a vague idea that it would have been better had she conducted herself with more decorum, and have communicated her information with an air that had more of sorrow than of anger. Perhaps, too, it might have served her purpose to more advantage had she revealed her knowledge to Moultrie direct, and tried to make terms with him. It

was too late now, however, to undo what had been done. She looked up. François was still standing in the doorway. He was actually beckoning to her. There was nothing to do but to follow him to the front door, with the consciousness that she had been actually turned out of the house, and threatened with a policeman, and the second time in twenty-four hours ; but, nevertheless, feeling her paltry little soul swell with the thought of her anticipated triumph. She was sorry she could not have gotten in more about the meeting. Something in regard to Rachel being in love with Moultrie would doubtless, she imagined, have stuck an additional thorn into Theodora's flesh, which, although it might have been promptly extracted, would have left a festering sore for some time to come. Still, on the whole, she was not unsatisfied.

CHAPTER VI.

DOUBTS ARE DISSIPATED.

THEODORA went to her room, and throwing herself into a large arm-chair that stood in front of the sea-coal fire, tried to compose her mind so as to think calmly of the interview through which she had just passed, as well as of its antecedents and its possible consequences. Although she had borne herself in Miss Billy Bremen's presence with her accustomed dignity in trying or embarrassing situations, there was no denying the fact that the information that the lady had communicated had greatly unsettled her. She called to mind as well as she could the circumstances which, over a year ago, had attended the action of the Vigilance Committee in the cases of Messrs. Jim Bosler and Luke Kittle. She remembered how her father, Dr. Willis, who had been the head of the organization, which numbered among its members the best citizens of the locality, had been induced through her entreaties and the arguments of Tyscovus not only to resign the presidency, but to retire altogether from the association. She knew very well what lawless individuals the two men were upon whom the Vigilance Committee had visited the punishment which the law was incompetent to inflict; that Bosler had only a short time before wantonly killed an inoffensive man, the eleventh of a series of murders he had committed in Colorado, and that Kittle, almost as vile a

character as the other, had deliberately planned the death of a man whose existence was obnoxious to him, and had carried out his conception in the very town in which she lived. She also knew that there was general rejoicing in the Territory over the double execution that the Vigilance Committee had effected ; that meetings had been held and congratulatory resolutions passed, and that the press of the Territory, without, so far as she knew, a single exception, had justified the action as in every way commendable. Still, she had always, while to some extent admitting the propriety of the course taken by the people to rid themselves of two desperadoes, recognized the fact that in the eye of the law the executions were deliberate murders, and that although the regular administrators of justice might have been incapable or indisposed to act against the members of the committee, just as they had always been incapable of proceeding against Bosler and Kittle, it had nevertheless been their duty to ferret out the perpetrators and to bring them to trial. She remembered, too, how glad she had been that her father had left the committee before the hanging of the two men.

And now she was told that her own husband, the one in all the world most dear to her, whose whole mind was, she thought, trained in the paths of justice, and truth, and uprightness, whithersoever they led, had not only been the leader of the committee on that eventful night, but had sat in judgment on those men, had condemned them to death, and had ordered their execution. Was it all true ? Had this woman, for some nefarious purpose of her own, come to her with these lies upon her lips ? That she was malicious and unscrupulous was very certain ; that she had misrepresented the characters of the two scoundrels

was unquestionable. These were matters of very little consequence to Theodora. Had she uttered a falsehood when she declared that Geoffrey Moultrie had sent those men to their death? That was the question that concerned her. For, if true, not only had he, in her opinion, committed a grievous wrong, but he had, by keeping her in ignorance of his act, been disloyal to her, his wife, whose inmost thoughts had always been open to him. She sat with her hands covering her face, while every now and then a tear dropped from between her closed fingers. She tried to believe that the woman had lied. At one moment she had almost fully persuaded herself that it was a falsehood, just as was the assertion that Moultrie had insulted the women at the meeting. But the merciless logic of circumstances soon came to brush away the flimsy wall she had set up against being convinced, and she brought to mind many events that went to show that what the woman had said was true.

She remembered the night on which Bosler and Kittle were hung. Moultrie was staying at her father's house at the time. All that day there had been many persons calling to see him. He had announced that business would take him away early in the evening, and that he should probably be absent all night. He did not tell her what his business was, but at eight o'clock he had left the house, with a large army-revolver buckled around his waist. She did not see him again for several days, and then he was with Tyscovus on the butte. He had found his daughter—she who for many years had been supposed to be Bosler's child. But the night on which he had left Chetolah, Bosler and Kittle were hanged to the giant pine-tree that stood half-way up the butte. She had never asked him for the details of his adventures,

and he had never volunteered any information on the subject, beyond the fact that Lal had escaped from Bosler's cabin at Bighorn Spring after her reputed father had informed her of his intention to marry her to Luke Kittle, had taken refuge with Tyscovus on the butte, and had there been found by her real father.

Since then the hanging of the men had often been the subject of conversation between her and her husband, but he had never by one single word intimated that he had had anything whatever to do with the deed. If he had been the leader of the committee, the judge, the executioner, he had not taken her into his confidence, but had, by his silence, left the fact to come to her knowledge by the mouth of a vulgar woman, who had insulted her in her own house, and had left it with threats of vengeance. Was it possible that he would wilfully keep her in ignorance of an act of his life second to none other in importance, and which so nearly concerned a member of her household, his own daughter? Ah! if it were true, then indeed had her idol fallen from the lofty height on which she had placed him. She might forgive him the act. She remembered that her own father had held the position which she had now been told her husband had occupied; she recalled to mind the fact that she herself had looked with leniency upon the doings of vigilance committees, which, though unlawful, were nevertheless in the interests of law and order. But all that was before their deeds had been brought home to her by the knowledge that her own husband had been the chief actor in an illegal execution. It was a shock to her. It would have distressed her had he himself told her of the part he had taken, but she would have condoned it—yes, and much more—anything, in

fact, that he could have done, whether against the laws of God or man, if he himself had whispered in her ear the story of his sin or crime. But to have lived for more than two years under his roof, to have had his lips press hers, to have lain upon his breast, and to have listened to the beating of a heart that she had thought was open to her in all its inmost recesses, and then to find that she, his wife, had been shut out from all knowledge of a secret that was known to a low-minded person, such as was this Bremen woman, and which by to-morrow would be the town talk—this was gall and wormwood to her. It was a sin and a crime both—not one only ; one sin, one crime she could have forgiven—but repeated every moment of their two lives since she had been his wife. Yes, that very morning he had kissed her, and spoken words of love to her, and with a smile upon his face, as though she were all in all to him, while at the very time there had been treason in his heart. *That* she felt she could never forgive.

She raised her eyes, and looked at the Sèvres porcelain clock that stood on the mantel-piece before her. It was nearly eleven o'clock. The woman had made threats against her husband of which it was her duty to warn him ; and then, though she saw no loop-hole through which to escape from the conviction that she had been told the truth relative to his connection with the hanging of Bosler and Kittle, she could not rest till she had had the confirmation or denial from his own lips. He had never lied to her—of that she felt he was incapable—and even in his refusal to give her his confidence there was no dishonor. There might be something he would say that would take from this act all its sting, and then—ah, yes !—then she would forgive him.

She went into her boudoir adjoining, and sat down at her desk to write him a note, requesting him to return to the house immediately, as matters of great importance required his immediate presence. His photograph, taken just after their marriage, stood on a little easel before her. She stopped writing to look at it; and as she looked, all her past married life came in rapid review before her. It seemed to her as though she saw with supernatural power every act of love and kindness that he had ever done her. His brave, manly, straightforward life was all before her. She recalled how he had made for himself a name that all the world honored; how mountains, and deserts, and rivers had yielded before his well-directed energy and power; how in all the trying situations in which he had been placed—in all his successes, in all his misfortunes—he had borne himself before all men with honor and courage, and that his name was a tower of strength to anything with which he was connected.

And she for one fault, which, perhaps, was not a fault, had said in her heart that she could never forgive him, and this without hearing a word from him. “My God! what was I about to do?” she exclaimed aloud. “My pride has blinded me—my selfish pride. Oh, my love! my love! it is I who am disloyal.” She pressed her lips to the photograph as she spoke, and then throwing down her pen and closing her desk, rang the bell. “Order my coupé immediately,” she said to her maid. Then she put on her hat and shawl, and went to Lalage’s room. “I am going down-town to see your father,” she said. “Something has occurred that requires his immediate attention. Have you any message for him?”

Lalage looked up from the book she was reading, and on which Mrs. Bowdoin was making comments in the

nature of explanations and amplifications. She noticed the slightly agitated manner which not even Theodora, with all her self-control, could altogether subdue, and a little feeling of alarm arose.

“It is nothing much,” said Theodora, observing the expression in Lalage’s face, “only something about the election that requires to be looked after at once, and—and—” she added, hesitatingly, “concerning those two men, Bosler and Kittle, who—”

Lalage’s face became pallid, and she staggered as though she would have fallen to the floor. She managed, however, to recover her composure—for Theodora had stopped speaking on seeing the effect produced upon the girl—and to say, “Have they been heard from?”

“Heard from!” exclaimed Theodora. “Why, don’t you know what became of them?”

“I only know that they got away from the Vigilance Committee. I never heard anything more, and I was always afraid to ask.”

Then he had not even told his daughter, thought Theodora. She thanked God that no other person, at any rate, had been his confidant. Yes, he must have had good reasons for keeping the matter secret from both; but it was not for her to reveal the truth.

“Oh, no,” she said, with as much coolness as she could command, and with the intention of relieving Lalage’s fears, “there is no fear of their ever coming back! They will never show their faces again to any of us.” Then she called to mind the fact that Lal was Geoffrey’s daughter, and she put her arm around the girl’s neck and kissed her. “I don’t believe you half know how much I love you, dear,” she continued. “You be-

long to him, and everything that is his is mine. Good-by; I'll give your love to him, and tell him I found you hard at work." Then with a smile and a nod to Mrs. Bowdoin, she was gone.

Her coupé was at the door. The footman touched his hat as she crossed the sidewalk. "To Mr. Moultrie's office," she said, as she stepped into the carriage. She felt that every moment was of value. "And tell John to drive fast," she added.

"Somethin's up, John," said the man, in a low tone, as he mounted the box, "and you're to drive like the devil."

"All right!" answered the coachman; "like the devil she goes, then. But what do you think it is, Joey? I don't think the madam's been down to the office for more'n a year."

"Well, I don't know; I ain't in her secrets, you see. But there's Frenchy, he'll know all about it. Them dinin'-room fellows has got the start on us."

"Yes, that's true; but then, Joey, we knows where they go, and that's a good deal with some on 'em."

"Well, it ain't much with these 'ere swells, 'cause, you see, they don't go nowhere out o' the way."

Down Fifth Avenue they went, and then down Broadway as rapidly as the crowded state of that thoroughfare would permit.

"I think it's the 'lection, Joey," said John at last, after a silence of several minutes, during which whatever brain-work he could divert from the task before him of guiding his horses had been given to the solution of the problem that had suggested itself to his mind. "Did you read them sintiments in the *Avenger* this mornin'?"

I tell you that they went for the boss like a thousand o' brick."

"Did I read 'em!" answered Joey, with a tone of offended dignity. "Why, ain't I one o' O'Leary's committee in this 'ere precink! Or in the one where he lives," he continued, remembering that he had travelled several miles from Moultrie's stable, in which he had his legal residence. "There ain't much as goes into that paper as I don't see. It did give the boss perticler fits. But Lord bless you! he don't care nothin' for Mike Flanigan nor his paper, neither. I wish I could a' seen him a-layin' out them women! I don't believe he left a grease-spot of 'em. As to the madam, I shouldn't wonder if you was right about the 'lection. She's just as much into it as if she was a-runnin' for Congress as well as her husband. It's somethin' mighty strong, or you wouldn't see her goin' down-town at this time o' day."

"And there ain't no way as we can find out, 'cept from Frenchy, and he's just about as likely to get things mixed as not," said John, with an accent of regret. "I'll bet a dollar it's a mighty big thing as takes the madam down-town to-day. She's in an awful hurry."

"I say, Joey, ain't you goin' to vote for the boss?" he remarked, after another five minutes' silence.

"John, if I tell you a secret don't you never breathe it to a livin' soul."

"I'm mum, Joey; never a word passes my lips."

"Well, I'm goin' to vote for the old man. He's always treated me fair, and I'm goin' for him; but it wouldn't do to let the boys know as I scratched O'Leary."

"I'll shake your hand, Joey, for that when I get rid

o' these reins. I'm goin' for the boss, too, though he's runnin' agin' Jackson, the riglar nominee. He's a square man, is the boss, and he's goin' to get my vote as sure as you're born."

Just then the carriage turned into Wall Street, and in a minute or two stopped at Moultrie's office, nearly opposite the Custom House. In an instant "Joey" was off the box and the door opened. Theodora waited before getting out till the man, whom she sent at once on the errand, returned to say whether Moultrie was in or not. She did not have long to wait, for Moultrie himself came out. "Is anything the matter?" he said, with a shade of anxiety in his voice and look.

"Nothing very special, but yet something of sufficient importance to require you to be informed of it at once."

"Then you had better get out, as we can talk more at ease in my room. Come!" She gave him her hand, and he escorted her into his apartments.

"Now, dear," he said, as he placed her in a comfortable chair in his private room before a cheerful fire, while he stood leaning against the mantel-piece, "I must first thank you for taking the trouble to come all the way down here to tell me in person this important piece of news."

"Yes, I think it is important. I had a visit this morning from a woman calling herself Miss Billy Bremen."

"Ah! she is one of the committee I am accused of insulting."

"The same. She came to tell me that she had information in regard to you that she was about to publish, and which, when known, would defeat your election to Congress."

"She overestimates its importance. There is nothing I have ever done that would lose me one vote. There is one thing that I regret, but the publication of that would gain me a thousand votes more than I would otherwise get; for the world at large would look on it in a different light from that in which I see it. I have never told it to you, my darling, because I have been ashamed of the part I took, and I feared—yes, without cause I know now," as Theodora, rising from her chair, threw herself into his arms, "that you might think me a little less worthy of all your love."

"I know it all, Geoffrey. That woman told me."

"Ah, well," he said, with a little sadness in his tone, as he pressed her head against his breast, "it was not so much the deed that was wrong as were the motives that led me to do it. When it was suggested to me, in the first place, that I should take the command of the Vigilance Committee that had been organized for the purpose of ridding the Territory of desperate characters whose crimes had terrified the people, and whom the law was powerless to reach, I declined, because my heart was not in the work, and I really disapproved of the method of procedure contemplated. When I was told that one of the men to be seized, tried, and executed was the wretch who had stolen my child and had been the cause of my wife's insanity and death, I reconsidered my determination, and accepted the leadership that had been offered me. Herein was my wrong: that which I was unwilling to do for the good of the public I undertook from motives of personal vengeance. The hanging of those men was a righteous act, but it was a sin for me to be the one to condemn them to death.

"I soon became aware of this—for at first, led away

by the sense of the wrongs I had endured, I did not perceive it—and then, knowing your own high standard of right, I feared to tell you what I had done, lest you should see in me some one lower than the ideal you had conceived. That is all.”

He ceased speaking, but she made no response, though he could feel her form trembling in his embrace. Almost imperceptibly his arms clasped less strongly. Did she really condemn him? he asked himself. He had not spared himself in the confession he had made; he had appealed to feelings that are supposed to reside to some extent in every woman's heart, but she had been silent. For a moment it seemed to him as though he had lost her forever, for he was one of those men with whom it must be everything or nothing. It was not, he thought, a case for argument, but yet he felt as though he must make one last effort to bring her heart back to him.

“For nearly seventeen years,” he continued, “I had suffered agonies which, fortunately for mankind, few are called upon to endure. The certainty of the death of my child would have been a relief, but that certainty was denied me. Night after night I had lain awake or had paced the floor, thinking of her who was lost to me, and haunted by visions of what might be her fate. On the arid plains of Russia, amid the snows of the Andes, the image I had formed of her was ever before me. Then, when I had abandoned all hope, I was told that my child was found, and that the wretch who had brought all this sorrow upon me was within my reach. If, in the fulness of my joy, I yielded to the feeling that, for good or evil, is in every man's breast, and did that which in calmer moments I perceived was arrogating

to myself powers that belong to God, it seems to me that—”

“ You would have been only a little less than divine to have resisted !” exclaimed Theodora, raising her face and throwing her arms around his neck. “ Yes, it was wrong,” she continued, “ but it was human, and I really think now I should have loved you less had you allowed the men to escape. But I was not silent from any doubt as to how I should act toward you,” she continued, as he kissed her again and again, “ but because I felt I had been unjust to you, and my mind was full of self-reproaches. When I reflected,” she went on, after a pause, and moved by that frankness that was one of the most charming traits of her character, “ upon what that woman told me, I was at first overcome with surprise, and my pride was piqued that you had kept the matter secret from me. That, I think, caused me to see but one side of the question, and for a moment I felt as though I had suffered a great injury, and that you had committed a serious crime. But it was only for a moment, and I came here confident that you would dispel every cloud from my mind. But never be again afraid of testing my love. If you were to kill fifty men you would still be dear to me.”

“ I suppose that is a very womanly expression,” he said, smiling, “ but I don’t propose to test your love to that extent, though I shall not in future refuse to put it on trial, should occasion require. I have never told Lal of my part in the hanging of the men. Indeed, she does not even know that they are dead. But here, I think, I had more justification for silence than I had with you, for you know that, notwithstanding Bosler’s bad treatment of her at the last, he had, as she said, been kind to

her after his way for many years, and she is not one to forget such things. She cannot, however, learn the truth more appropriately from any one than from me, and I shall take an early opportunity of telling her all. I am only sorry that your knowledge should have come from Miss Billy Bremen instead of from your husband."

"But don't you think, dear, that something should be done to counteract any steps to injure you that she may take? Depend upon it, the statement she will make public will be full of lies from beginning to end."

Moultrie thought for a moment, and then answered in a tone of decision, "Yes, and I think we shall take the wind out of her sails. I shall at once prepare and send to the evening newspapers a full statement of the whole affair, or rather I shall request the editor of each of the three principal evening papers to send an interviewing reporter to me at once. That will be better. The account will be copied by the morning papers, so that Miss Billy will find her news partaking somewhat of the character of ancient history."

He went to a table and hurriedly wrote three notes. Then he rang a bell, and told the man who answered to take them at once to the offices of the papers to which they were directed. "Now," he continued, "I shall telegraph to the Governor of Colorado and request him to send me a statement in regard to the characters of Bosler and Kittle and the feeling in the Territory relative to the propriety and necessity of the course of the Vigilance Committee; and also to state what action was taken by the legislature concerning the matter at its session a few weeks subsequently. Although I cannot get an answer in time for this evening's papers, it will arrive in ample season for those of to-morrow morning."

While Moultrie was speaking and arranging his plans for the circumvention of Miss Billy Bremen's schemes, Theodora's face wore an expression of intense satisfaction. Here, indeed, she thought was a man of whom she might be proud to be the wife. Without the least sign of annoyance, still less of fear, he had at once taken in all the possibilities of the situation, and had arranged his plan of action with a boldness that excited her warmest admiration. She saw at once how completely he would neutralize the designs of his enemies by the measures that he proposed taking. Indeed, as he had said, there was no doubt that the facts of his connection with the Vigilance Committee would be regarded as being to his advantage rather than to his detriment, and would increase his vote several hundred above that which he would otherwise receive.

When he had finished she prepared to take her leave. "I am so glad I came down," she said. "It is such a pleasure to me to be of any service to you, and this time I have helped you a little, haven't I?"

He took her face between his hands and kissed her. "You have not only rendered me a great service, but you have done still more for me by giving me your love and causing me to understand that nothing I am likely to do will make me lose it."

"No, nothing," she answered, smiling, "not even your refusal to advocate woman's rights in Congress. But I had almost forgotten," she continued, drawing, as she spoke, a letter from her pocket. "Just after you left the house this morning a messenger brought me this communication, and I want your advice as to what answer to give."

She handed him the letter, and he read as follows :

“ 7 WEST -TH STREET, NEW YORK, }
November 4, 1874. }

“ DEAR MADAM : I am directed by the Board of Trustees of the ‘ Martha Washington Medical College for Women ’ to notify you that at a meeting held this evening you were unanimously elected a member of the Board.

“ I am also instructed to inform you that you were at the same time, and by a like vote, appointed Professor of Physiology in the College.

“ In thus endeavoring to secure your valuable services to the institution under its charge, the Board hopes it is acting in accordance with your wishes, and that it may look for an acceptance of both positions.

“ I am, madam, with great regard,

“ Your obedient servant,

“ RACHEL MEADOWS, Secretary.”

“ Why, that’s the young lady who spoke last night at the meeting, and whom I am accused of insulting ! ” exclaimed Moultrie. “ Well, my dear, to use a slang expression, ‘ What are you going to do about it ? ’ ”

“ That is for you to say,” she answered. “ No wife has the right to undertake any public work or duty of any kind without her husband’s consent. The first thing she has to consider is its possible effect upon him.”

“ Perhaps you are right, generally speaking ; at any rate, it is very kind of you to think so. But I should feel like a tyrant were I to interfere with you in such a matter as this. I see there are two appointments. In regard to the trusteeship, I should think there could be no doubt relative to the propriety of your acceptance, provided only that your associates are ladies. Do you happen to know who they are ? ”

“ Yes ; an announcement of the college came with the letter. I did not bring it with me, but I looked over it and examined the list of officers. Among the trustees are Mrs. Gosford, Mrs. Fay, Mrs. Darby, Miss Oxworth, and Miss Meadows, the secretary. They are all ladies of good position, and several of them are acquaintances.”

“ Then we will regard that part of the proposition as settled by your acceptance, provided it is entirely agreeable to you. The other part is more important, for it is a position that involves publicity and great responsibility, and the assumption of which by you will immediately cause more or less friendly and unfriendly comment among your acquaintances—all of which requires consideration. Are you prepared to give an answer now ?”

“ Yes, as fully as I ever shall be.”

“ Do you feel competent to tackle the subject ?”

“ Yes.”

“ Now, my dear child,” he continued, “ I am perfectly free to say that your acceptance of this appointment would not interfere in the slightest degree with me or any of my plans. Neither would it offend my sense of what is right for my wife to do. When I married you I knew what the course of your studies had been, and I saw that you were correct in the opinion that you once expressed to me, that there is nothing incompatible between anatomical and physiological studies and the most bewitching womanly delicacy. Well, my darling, a married life of over two years has not taught me differently. You are still to me the sweetest woman the sun ever shone upon, and I do not believe you will be any the less tender and fascinating as a professor of physiology than as plain Theodora Moultrie.”

“ Oh, Geoffrey, how good you are !” cried Theodora,

her lovely face beaming with the pleasure his words produced. "And am I all that to you?" she continued. "I never would have believed it if you had not told me. So you advise me to accept the professorship?"

"Ah, my dear!" he exclaimed, laughing, "I did not say that. Advice and approval are two very different things. I shall be most pleased at your doing that which pleases you best. It is a selfish feeling with me, I admit. I wish to see you happy. I perceive how strong a hold your studies have upon you; therefore, when you tell me that you feel competent to teach physiology to women, and that you would like to do it, I find my happiness in giving my consent."

"And would you like it better if I declined? Oh, Geoffrey, I do so want to please you! Suppose," she continued, as she made him sit down, while she placed herself on his knee, and put one arm around his neck—"suppose I were to tell you that I did not care to take this appointment, would you be better pleased than you are now, that you think I wish to accept it? Oh, my love, tell me what you wish me to do without regard to me!"

"You little witch, you would seduce the very elect, I do believe. Have I not told you, dear?"

"Yes; but you must answer my question."

"Well, I will. If you were to tell me that you did not care to accept the professorship, you would make me very unhappy."

"Why?"

"Because I should feel that you were telling me what was not true in order to please me."

"You think, then, that I am anxious to take the place?"

“ Yes ; I know you are.”

“ You are right,” she said, gravely, after a moment’s pause. “ I am anxious ; but you will believe me, Geoffrey, when I say to you, as I do now in the sight of God, and with my heart beating against yours, that I would take more pleasure in acting according to your wish than in doing anything else in all the world.”

“ I do believe you, dear ; but woman is ever ready to sacrifice herself for the man she loves, and to take pleasure in the act. Generally, he is willing enough to accept the immolation. It assures him of her love, and gratifies his vanity at the same time. Now, I need no such proof of your affection, and shall I tell you ? I am vainer of your knowledge and your good sense than I am of any qualities of mine that cause you to love me. Therefore, you will please me best by accepting the professorship tendered you ; and I here pledge you my hearty support, and promise you that no word of mine shall ever reproach you.”

“ Oh, Geoffrey, are you sure of all that ?”

“ Quite sure, dear. If you were to decline, you would grieve me very much.”

“ Then, I shall take it !” she exclaimed, rising. “ I shall go home and write my acceptance at once. But remember, I shall hold it only during your pleasure.”

“ You will hold it as long as you please, and that will be during my pleasure.”

He stopped to write his telegram to the Governor of Colorado, and then the two left the room. She sent the carriage home empty, and he walked with her as far as the corner of Wall Street and Broadway, and saw her safely over the latter street at this, its most crowded part. Then he sent the telegram to the governor, and

returned to his office to meet the three reporters. Two hours afterward the true story of the hanging of Jim Bosler and Luke Kittle was scattered broadcast over the city.

There was but one opinion among people of all classes in regard to the act, and that was, that it was a righteous deed well done. But there were many who professed different views from those they really held. There was much impotent gnashing of teeth on the part of some of the more virulent of Moultrie's political enemies, for they saw their strongest card rendered useless. The people at the *Avenger* and *Controller* offices felt particularly indignant, for they had each had a visit that morning from Miss Billy Bremen, who, with much malicious glee, informed them that the publication would fill the hearts of Moultrie and his friends with terror. Now they saw that, so far from being scared at the idea of his connection with the affair becoming known, he had voluntarily told the whole story. Toward evening, they, as well as the other papers to be issued in the morning, were provided with copies of the governor's telegram, which was as follows :

“ DENVER, November 5, 1874.

“ TO GEOFFREY MOULTRIE, ESQ., NEW YORK.

“ The execution of James Bosler and Luke Kittle in the fall of 1872, by the Vigilance Committee of Hellbender, in this Territory, met with the universal approval of the people. Both were of the worst type of scoundrels, and Bosler had murdered eleven men. The law was powerless to reach these men, and the public safety demanded their death. In accordance with the general wish expressed by the people in public meetings and

through the press, an act of indemnity and of thanks was passed by the Legislative Council at the session of 1873-74, which I had great pleasure in approving.

“W. C. PRENTISS,
“Governor of Colorado.”

On receiving a copy of this telegram the *Avenger* and the *Controller* thought it advisable not to mention the affair, though the other morning papers published it in full, besides making copious extracts from the account of Moultrie's interview with the reporters.

After the return from Jerome Park, Moultrie communicated to Lalage the whole story of his connection with the hanging of Bosler and Kittle. That she was surprised was a matter of course, for she had not even known that they were dead. It can scarcely be said, however, that she regretted that she was now absolutely safe from them in the future ; for with all the sense of security she experienced as Moultrie's daughter, and with the utmost reliance on his power to defend her, there was at times a vague feeling of apprehension in regard to these men, that nothing could altogether allay. Lal was endowed with excellent common-sense. She was capable of at once perceiving all the salient points of a subject submitted to her mind. Her early associations had been such as to make her familiar with the theory and practice of vigilance committees ; and though she had been brought up by Mr. and Mrs. Bosler to hate them, she knew that there was no repressive agency so greatly feared as this swift, silent, but expeditious power, which struck its deadly blows in the name of law and order. She knew, too, with what thorough contempt Bosler had regarded the law, and how he had repeatedly said that it would be im-

possible to convict him—even if the officers dared to make his arrest—for any act he might commit. “Why,” he used to say, “two or three on us owns them constables, body and soul, and we bought ’em cheap, too. And as to juries, I’d jist like to see twelve men in a box in Costilla County, and me with nary a friend among ’em. It’s jist onpossible. The rope that’s to hang me ain’t bin made yit, nor the rope-walk built, nor the men born as is to make it.”

But with all his bragging, she knew that he had a wholesome fear of vigilance committees, and that this feeling had often restrained him from the commission of contemplated crimes. It was, therefore, no difficult undertaking for Moultrie to convince her that there were times in the lives of states and of men where the laws that men had made for their own good must be disregarded in the presence of circumstances for which the laws made no specific provision. He reminded her that the killing of a man in the abstract is no crime. Homicide in personal self-defence is a justifiable act, and homicide in defence of the State a still more righteous deed. Even killing in the protection of property is perfectly legitimate.

He told her how, in the suppression of a mutiny, an army or navy officer does not hesitate to kill on the spot; that policemen in making arrests are often obliged to take life, and that under all circumstances and in all situations the safety of the people is the first law, although it is written in no statute-book.

But while justifying the executions of Bosler and Kittle, Moultrie did not attempt to gloss over his own share in the transaction. He admitted that the desire to punish Bosler for the acts against him that he had com-

mitted was the determining cause of his participation in the proceeding. With the hanging of Kittle, however, he had had nothing to do, as he had turned over the command of the committee and the functions of judge before that individual was brought to trial. It was a wrong motive in him, and he could only plead his humanity in extenuation. Had it been the only incentive, he would, he declared, long ago have demanded a trial ; but he was conscious that he had been to a great extent actuated by a regard for the public welfare, and in conducting the proceedings against Bosler he had studiously refrained from intruding his own private griefs and wrongs upon the committee. The wretch had been tried solely for the murder of a man named Hallam, whom he had killed wantonly, for the mere amusement of committing murder, and for that crime he was executed. Mankind, he pointed out to her, would not regard his motives as unworthy a man of honor. The destroyer of the peace of a household, such as was Bosler, can find no refuge among civilized mankind from the vengeance of those who have suffered at his hands. If he had met Bosler after becoming acquainted with the fact that he was the abductor of his child, the cause of his wife's mental derangement and death, and of his suffering during seventeen years—if he had encountered this man in the streets of any city in the United States, with the memory of his wrongs strong in his heart, and had shot him down like a dog, no jury could have been found to convict him. All this, however, did not make his conduct right in his own sight, and ever since he had not ceased to reproach himself for his agency in the affair. He had had his punishment—was still receiving it, in fact, and he admitted the justice with which it was meted out to him.

"Time," he said, "may soften the infliction, but probably will never altogether remove from my mind the consciousness that I did a sinful act.

"And yet, dear," he continued, as Lal raised his hand to her face wet with tears, "I am not morbid over the matter. I have so much to make me happy, that continual sorrow would be impossible, I think. But every now and then the pang comes. It is instantaneous. It goes as quickly as it strikes, but while it is there it is severe. And thus I am reminded that in taking upon myself the office of an avenger I violated that mandate of God, 'Vengeance is mine—I will repay!'"

"No, no," cried Lal, as she put her arms around his neck and drew his head to her breast; "don't say that to me. Don't you remember how he sold me to Luke Kittle, and tied me with ropes and straps like a sheep as is sold to the butcher? Whar would I a' bin now ef it hadn't bin for you and the others as was agin him? Oh, father," she continued, in an agony of grief, and tears, and sobs that almost choked her utterance, "my darlin', ef I thought as you war goin' to feel like that all your life, I'd never smile agin—oh, no, never agin!"

It was sweet to him, this tempest of emotion, that rose like a mountain torrent of the Sierra Madre, sweeping everything before it in its resistless course. Her tears were sweet, her sobs were music to his ears, but dearer than all were the words that welled up from her heart and rushed forth in the homely dialect of her childhood. Yes, if anything in all the world could banish his remorse, it would be the love of this dear child, whom he had rescued from a fate worse than death. Once more he pressed her to his heart.

"I'd a' killed him myself onst," continued Lal, "ef

I'd had a knife. Oh, I was mighty fierce then, I tell you ; and when he was a-tryin' to put them cords and straps around me his life warn't worth a cent to me ! And now you're goin' to make yourself miserable all your life for him as would a-done them things to me ! I jist can't stand it. I'd rather die. Oh, yes, I'd rather die right now ! And all on account of a man as stole me and killed my mother !”

“My dear child,” he said at last, “every word you say is inexpressibly sweet to me. I think if I had told you all at the very first you would have done much to lessen the regret I experienced, and to prevent its taking so firm a hold of me. I think I can promise you that it will not trouble me much henceforth. What argument and reason could never have done the outpouring of your sympathy and love will scarcely fail to accomplish. Come ! dry your pretty eyes,” he continued, with a smile, “and get back into a civilized form of speech. Do you know that for the last five minutes you have been talking like a ‘Wild Girl of the West,’ or ‘a Prairie Rose,’ as Tyscovus calls you ?”

The sunshine of her smile came out again, as with her arm in his she went into the drawing-room.

That night Theodora wrote her acceptance of the two appointments that had been tendered her.

CHAPTER VII.

AN ELECTION AND ITS RESULT.

THE election was over. Each of the three parties had exhausted all its devices for reaching the sophisticated and the unsophisticated voter, according to his kind ; but the two opponents of Moultrie had felt all day that the chances for either of them were slim. The publication of the fact that he had headed a vigilance committee organized for the purpose of ridding Colorado of a set of desperadoes that had for many years disturbed the peace of the Territory and had defied the law had aided him greatly, very much to the disgust of Miss Billy Bremen and her coadjutors. Men reasoned that he had shown his readiness to accept the most weighty responsibilities, and to do his utmost while they were on his shoulders to carry them through to a successful termination. No quality appeals more strongly to the heart of the average man than courage, especially that moral species of the faculty that causes the possessor to stand up and face the consequences of his acts.

The poll had been a large one, and according to the returns received at Moultrie's headquarters, his vote was greatly in excess of that given to either of his opponents. Still, although all reports were of an encouraging nature, nothing definite could of course be known till the counting of the ballots was finished. He had not visited the polling-places during the day, notwithstanding the

fact that his "committee" thought it would be advisable for him to show himself to his adherents, if only for the purpose of keeping up their spirits. He had invited the Hon. Tom Burton to dine with him, and had asked two other personal friends to meet him. The gentlemen were in the library after dinner smoking their cigars and awaiting, without much apprehension as to the result, the reception of the semi-official returns. It was now eight o'clock, and they could not be much longer delayed.

"I shouldn't be at all surprised," said Mr. Burton, as he shook the ashes from his cigar into a little silver dish that stood on the table by his side, "if you had a plurality of three thousand over O'Leary. I suppose there is no doubt that he will lead Jackson."

"I am not so sure of that," said Mr. Braden, a prominent lawyer, who had taken great interest in Moultrie's canvass. "Jackson has great strength among the Germans and among a certain class of manufacturers who do not know what is good for them. I think it will be close between them; but I am quite certain that Jackson will poll more votes than O'Leary."

"Burton is right, I think," observed Judge Miller, a portly gentleman about fifty years of age, who spoke with great deliberation, as though he were weighing every word that escaped from his lips. "Of course it would not do for a member of the judiciary to take an active part in an election. At least, that has always been my idea. But in a quiet way I have been an observant spectator, and I am very certain that O'Leary will poll a much larger vote than Jackson. He has, in the first place, as you know, the 'indorsement,' as it is called, of Tuscarora Hall, and that has gone far to add to his

strength. He will get a good portion of the German and nearly the whole of the Irish vote."

"Yes, that is so!" exclaimed Burton; "but did you hear how every Italian vote in the district was secured for our friend here? I don't believe he knows. But, as it's over now, I suppose I may as well tell him."

"I hope," said Moultrie, gravely, "that no misleading representations were made to them."

"Oh, no," answered Burton, laughing; "it was not so bad as that; but at the same time it shows how easily votes can sometimes be obtained. I think I shall have to tell, if only to show that fact, as well as to let you know how readily some of these foreigners learn the art of manipulating their people."

"Well," he continued, as a general assent was given, "since I've been here in New York I've occasionally taken my meals at Fiescoli's restaurant, for I'm rather partial to Italian cookery. About a week ago, as I was eating a dish of maccaroni, as only Fiescoli can cook it, I called him to me, and complimented him on its excellence. He was greatly delighted with my praises, and seeing that his heart was open to the reception of grand ideas and sound political truth, I asked him how he was going to vote. Without any hesitation he informed me that he should vote for Jackson, mainly, however, as he said, because all the Irish were going to vote for O'Leary, and because some one had told him—some emissary of Jackson's, as I afterward learned—that Moultrie was a Frenchman. Now, Fiescoli hates the French almost as bad as he does the Irish, so that he naturally went in for Jackson."

"I soon disabused his mind of the idea that you were anything else than an American of over two hundred

years' existence in the country, and then I tackled him on the tariff. 'How much does your macaroni cost you a box?' I inquired.

" 'Four dollars,' he answered, with a groan.

" 'And what is it worth in Naples?'

" 'Less than two dollars,' he replied, with a sigh that seemed like the distant rumbling of Mount Vesuvius.

" 'Well, my friend,' I said, though with some difficulty, for I had just put a mess as big as a teacup into my mouth, and was adjusting it to its new situation, 'the difference goes into the pockets of the "Sweetwater Macaroni Manufacturing Company," who, you will doubtless admit, make a devilish bad article.'

" 'I should think so!' he exclaimed in his picturesque—the Hon. Tom was not always precise in his use of adjectives—"English; 'I wouldn't presume to set it before you. You wouldn't eat it, though I have been told that that rascal Mali gives it to his customers because it costs a few cents less on the box.'

" 'You'd like to get your macaroni fresh from Naples, wouldn't you, and just as cheap as you could there, with the little addition of the freight?'

" 'Of course I would. I have a cousin who makes it. I'd buy more, and I'd sell more, for I could sell it cheaper.'

" 'My friend!' I exclaimed, jumping up, 'give me your hand! You are a political economist of the first water. Now, Mr. Moultrie is in favor of letting in all the macaroni Naples can make free of duty. He's the man for you. Don't you see?'

" 'Well, to cut the story short, I not only secured his vote, but I arranged a meeting of Italians to take place in his restaurant. About fifty of the prominent mem-

bers of the colony attended. I ascertained first that there were at least three hundred Italian voters in the district. Not many, perhaps, but every vote counts in an election. I ordered a supper of macaroni, ravioli, frittura, olives, and other Italian dishes, with plenty of *Vino di Capri* and *Montepulciano* to drink, and with the cry of 'Free macaroni!' I sent my disciples out into the wilderness; and the consequence was that every Italian vote was cast for Moultrie."

"And the further consequence will be," said Mr. Braden, laughing, "that when they find that they won't get their macaroni any cheaper next year than they do this, they will visit their indignation on Moultrie."

"Oh, well," exclaimed Burton, "'after me the deluge!' Still, it was all fair; I did not misrepresent Moultrie, for he is in favor of free macaroni."

"So I am, or, at least, very nearly so," said Moultrie; "but I am afraid you misled them in regard to my power to make the change. You ought to have been more exact on that point."

"Oh, they'll find that out soon enough, I promise you! Then you can write a letter to them that will quiet them till the next election comes round."

Just then a servant entered with a telegram, which he handed on a salver to Moultrie.

"The first returns," he said, as he opened the envelope. "Yes," reading the communication, "'Six precincts give Moultrie 2275, O'Leary 1250, and Jackson 1021.'"

"Hurrah!" exclaimed Burton, rising in his excitement and swinging his handkerchief. "By George! you'll beat them both together. You'll get returns

pretty rapidly now, and in half an hour we'll know who's elected."

"May we come in?" said Theodora, holding aside the heavy portière, and revealing herself and Lal standing in the doorway. "We're ever so anxious to hear the news, and we don't mind the smoke a bit."

Every gentleman was on his feet in an instant, and the cigars were dropped.

"Of course you may," said Moultrie, laughing, "provided you'll promise not to cry if I'm defeated."

"Oh, we'll promise anything; but we won't come unless you will go on with your smoking."

"You've been well brought up, Mrs. Moultrie," said Burton, and amid the general expression of the pleasure their company would give, the two ladies entered the room, and were escorted to chairs by Mr. Burton and Judge Miller. They had hardly got seated before another communication was brought in.

"'Eighteen precincts,'" said Moultrie, reading, "'give Moultrie 4280, O'Leary 2830, and Jackson 1450.'"

"Jackson is running behind, as I said he would," exclaimed Burton; "but by the immortal shade of Sam Houston, what a magnificent vote you're polling, Moultrie! Madam," turning to Theodora, "I am almost ready to congratulate you. How many precincts are there in this district, Judge?"

"About thirty, I think," answered that gentleman; "but the heaviest are to come in yet. Still, I don't see how any other than the result we desire can be obtained."

All through the dinner Burton had been so enraptured with Lal's appearance that he could not keep his eyes off of her, and she was more than sufficient to banish all

recollection of Rachel Meadows from the susceptible Texan's heart. He was one of those men who are taken with every pretty face they see, and whose constancy in matters of the affections is, up to a certain point, no more to be relied upon than that of the direction of the wind.

“In all my life,” said he to himself, as he stole a furtive glance at her, “I never saw such a beauty. She's the sort of a woman a man goes through fire and water for if necessary. I wish she'd ask me to do something for her. If she'd drop her glove into a den of wild beasts, I'd get it for her devilish quick, and I wouldn't throw it in her face, either, as did that blackguard De Longe.

“And she thought the count my lover is as brave as brave can be. He surely would do desperate things to show his love for me.”

If the house now would only catch fire or a burglar make his appearance just behind her chair, I'd show her what a Texan gentleman would do.”

“You Southerners take more interest in politics than we Northerners do,” said Theodora, addressing Burton.

“Yes, madam, even yet ; but you Northerners have done about the best you could to destroy the breed of Southern gentlemen as it was before the war. But I thought you were Southern.”

“So I am ; I'm a Virginian ; but a woman goes with her husband, you know.”

“Not always,” he answered, laughing ; “I can call to mind many instances on the breaking out of the war in which the husband went with the wife, and she hurried back to her plantation as soon as she could.”

He waited a moment to see if Theodora had any intention of continuing the conversation. Then, as she said something to Judge Miller, he turned to Lal :

“Do you take much interest in politics, Miss Moultrie ?”

“Only this time,” she answered, with a smile that sent Burton into the realms of bliss, “and—and one other,” with a little hesitation, and a blush that made her look still lovelier.

“That’s the Polish count,” thought Burton. “He’s running for delegate to Congress from some western Territory. A Polish count to get that angel ! My God ! what are we coming to ! I’ve seen three Polish counts in my day—one was a barber, one a runner for a steamboat, and the third tried to pick my pocket, and got knocked down and sent to Blackwell’s Island for his pains. He was the most enterprising of the lot, but not altogether a desirable acquaintance. I wonder if this one is any better ! Oh, he must be ! Moultrie is too sensible and the girl, too, to allow any frauds about. I’ll draw her out a little.

“And the other is—?” he said, interrogatively.

Without the least hesitation Lal answered, “The other is Mr. Tyscovus of Colorado. He is a Polish gentleman. My mother was a Pole.”

“Ah ! that,” he said, with feigned ignorance, “accounts for your interest in him. Foreigners are getting all the best places now,” and, he added to himself, “all the pretty girls, too.”

“He is half an American. His mother was a New Yorker.”

“And you are half Polish. Delightful !”

“Yes, it is very nice,” said Lal, simply.

“ Ah, there’s another report !” said Mr. Braden, as the man entered with the salver and the despatch.

Moultrie handed it to Theodora. “ Read it, my dear,” he said, and then, in a low voice to her, “ if it contains good news it will be all the more welcome from you.”

She smiled lovingly on him as she opened the envelope.

“ ‘ Twenty-five precincts,’ ” she read, “ ‘ give Moultrie 7930, O’Leary 4200, and Jackson 3482. Seven more precincts to be heard from. Moultrie certainly elected by a majority over both the other candidates.’ ”

“ Hurrah ! Hurrah ! Hurrah !” cried Burton, springing to his feet and waving his handkerchief. “ What did I tell you ? I’ll have to stay in New York to teach you fellows politics.”

Theodora had already given her hand to Moultrie ; Lal was the next to congratulate him, and then the gentlemen followed, Burton being the most enthusiastic. Then he shook hands with Theodora and with Lal, actuated probably in this latter instance more by a desire to get her little hand in his than by any other motive.

“ Miss Moultrie,” he said, “ I hope that ‘ other ’ will have as fortunate a termination as this.”

“ I do not know,” she answered ; “ it is very doubtful. The election took place to-day, but I do not expect to hear before to-morrow.”

“ Well, ‘ a happy issue out of all your afflictions,’ as the Bible says.”

“ That is not in the Bible, Mr. Burton. That is in the Prayer-book.”

“ Oh, yes, to be sure ! I knew I had seen it in some familiar place.”

Theodora had rung the bell, and "Joey" was entering with champagne in silver coolers. "I had this prepared," she said, "for I felt sure you would succeed."

"Happy the woman who has confidence in her husband!" exclaimed Burton. "Now, Mistress Moultrie, if you'll be kind enough to send that man away and allow me to act as Ganymede to our Jupiter and the other gods and goddesses, you will do me a great favor." Then, without waiting for an answer, he took the bottle from the man, and the wires being already removed, cut the strings that held the cork, and in true Southern style allowed the bottle to pop. "Now, ladies and gentlemen," he continued, "your glasses, please. My friend," *sotto voce* to "Joey," who was lingering with the other bottle, "won't you be kind enough to get out of the way?" "Joey" looked indignant, but at a sign from his mistress disappeared.

The Hon. Tom Burton was now in his element. He had already distributed glasses all around, and was engaged in filling them with the foaming liquor. "'Veuve Clicquot, etiquette jaune,' as I'm a living sinner! The only champagne fit for a gentleman to drink." All this to himself. "Now," he continued, addressing the whole party, "here's to the health of the Hon. Geoffrey Moultrie, Member of Congress elect from the city of New York. May he live a thousand years, and may we all be at his funeral!"

"What a horrid man!" said Lal to Theodora, after the toast had been drunk and the congratulations renewed. "I do not like him at all."

"A little effusive, my dear, but yet very sincere, I think, and quite funny sometimes."

"A final telegram," said Moultrie, at the end of a

few words of thanks, and as the missive was handed to him. "I suppose this will give us the total result. Yes, here it is :

" 'All the precincts in. Moultrie, 10,115 ; O'Leary, 5610 ; Jackson, 4002. Three cheers for Moultrie ! Good-night.' "

"So your plurality over O'Leary is 4505," said Burton, who, with paper and pencil, had already made the calculation, "and your majority over both him and Jackson 503. If it had not been for my Italians, it would only have been 200. Come, gentlemen," to the Judge and Mr. Braden, "won't you accompany me to the Fifth Avenue Hotel, where we shall learn something from the rest of the country ? The whole political interest of the campaign is not concentrated in this room."

He stayed a few minutes longer, mainly apparently for the purpose of finishing the second bottle of "Veuve Clicquot, etiquette jaune," and then he and the other two gentlemen took their departure.

Moultrie followed them out into the hall. "I owe a good deal to you, Burton," he said, shaking his hand again. "You're the best political manager I ever saw, though I think that perhaps you went a little too far with the Italians."

"Perhaps so," said the other, looking very much pleased at the expression of Moultrie's opinion ; "but you can make it all right by giving them a reception at Fiescoli's, and asking them to bring their wives and children. As to my services, I am delighted to hear you say what you do. Now," he added, in a lower tone, "if you have any influence with the Administration—and doubtless you will be high in favor there—and you think I'm fit for it, get me the consulship to Barcelona.

I'm interested in Spanish art and history, and, by George ! I want an office of some kind. I think the desire for office was born in me, and I've been out in the cold now a long time."

"I'm quite sure of your competency, but I am afraid you overestimate my influence. Certainly, however, I will do what I can, and with great pleasure."

"I speak Spanish as well as I do English," continued Burton. "How many consuls, or even ministers, can speak the language of the country they go to? Not one in a hundred."

"That is true," relied Moultrie, laughing. "Many of them can't even speak their own language properly."

Hardly had Moultrie returned to the library, after seeing the gentlemen out of the house, than another telegram was brought to him. He looked at it, and then handed it to Lal. "This is for you, my dear," he said. "It is probably from Tyscovus."

She took it, and with hands that trembled a little opened the envelope. A gleam of pleasure at once appeared on her face, and deepened as she read.

"Oh, father," she exclaimed, "he is coming ! He will be here in less than three weeks, and he is elected."

"Read it aloud, Lal, dear."

"It is very short, only a few words :

" ' HELLBENDER, COLORADO, }
November 5, 1874. }

" ' TO MISS LALAGE MOULTRIE, No.— FIFTH AVENUE,
NEW YORK :

" ' Returns not all in, but enough received to make it certain that I am elected delegate by over 1500 majority.

Will be in New York on or before the 25th inst. Write to me at Planter's House, St. Louis.

“ ‘JOHN TYSCOVUS.’ ”

“ We are in luck to-night,” said Theodora. “ Everything seems to go well with us. This only was wanting to make our happiness complete.”

“ He will make his mark in Congress, my dear, even though he has only the right to speak, without that of voting,” said Moultrie to Lalage, who stood by his side, with her hands resting on his arm. “ Indeed, his whole career in this country has been somewhat remarkable.”

“ And before he came here it was still more so. I did not know it all when I left him on the butte, or I really think I could not have come away. But he wrote me a long letter once—oh, a very long letter!—many sheets of paper—and he told me his whole life.”

“ He has exhibited the most wonderful perseverance and courage, and suffered greatly. Now, however, my dear child, he has, so far as we can perceive, only happiness to look forward to. But I see you want to think over your telegram and its possibilities,” he added, smiling, “ so good-night, dear, and don't sit up so late as to spoil your eyes.”

She smiled sweetly as she kissed them both good-night. “ I am very happy to-night,” she said—“ oh, yes, very happy !”

She went to her own room, and began her preparations for going to bed. First she sent her maid away, for this was a night on which she wished to be alone. She stood in front of the mirror of her dressing-table, arranging her hair for the night. Perhaps she did not see what everybody else perceived, that she was wonder-

fully beautiful. She was not heavenly or angelic, or in any way supernatural, as are some of the women one hears described. She was only a human woman, but one of the loveliest specimens of the creation that ever walked the earth. Yes, she must have known that she was beautiful, for as her arms were raised above her head, and her hair fell in its raven-hued masses over her neck and shoulders, far below her waist, she smiled and whispered softly to herself, "I think he will love me more than ever now. I think he will like to see me." She finished what she had to do, and then putting on a wrapper of some soft material, and with her feet encased in little velvet slippers, she sat down by a square table in the centre of the room, on which stood a carcel-lamp. Then she opened, by touching a spring, a little antique iron cabinet that was on the table, and took from it a small book bound in vellum. The cover was very elaborately gilt in a diamond-shaped pattern, the interstices being occupied by *fleurs-de-lis* in gold. She opened the book, and read on the fly-leaf: "To Lal, from her friend John Tyscovus. The Butte, September 13th, 1872." Yes, that was when she had begun to love him. Her thoughts went back to that day. She saw herself on the floor at his feet, her arms clasped around his knees in an agony of mingled grief and joy. She saw the loving look in his eyes as he raised her from the floor; she recalled the strange, new feeling of rapture and bliss, tinged with fear, that had swept through her like a tempest, and that had impelled her to run away from him before he could say a word more. It was very dear to her, this little vellum-bound book, for it marked the boundary-line between her two lives. It was the emblem of her *renaissance*; it had been his. She pressed

it to her lips, then to her heart, and held it there as though it were the form of him she loved. For she was a woman almost as nature had made her, with all her fresh young feelings springing up in her breast, uncurbed by any prudish ideas that it was wrong to exhibit emotion, even to herself, in the privacy of her own chamber.

“ Oh, how I love him ! ” she said, as she still held the book close to her heart. She seemed to lose herself in the memories of the past, for she began to speak in the low, soft, melodious voice that captivated every ear that ever heard it, and in that rude dialect that, when she was greatly moved, asserted its power.

“ And then that night—that awful night, as I run up the butte to git away from them men as I thought was after me. I was awful skeered, and I wasn’t quite sure as he’d keer to see me agin. I knowed some one was after me, for I heard the stones rollin’ down the butte. I thought as how I mought git in the other room and stay thar till mornin’, and then go away and he never know as I’d bin thar at all. I run jist about as hard as I could, and that warn’t fast, for I was clean near broke down. I guess ef I’d had another ten yards to go, I’d a’ giv out ; but I got to the top, and thar he stood right afore me, with his dear arms ready for me. Oh, yes, for me ! And I heerd him say, ‘ Lal, my darlin’ ! ’ and then I knowed I was safe, and that he keered for me more’n any one else in all the world.

“ And now he’s comin’. Oh, my love ! my love ! Onst agin you’ll call me ‘ Lal,’ and I’ll see you and talk to you, and—and—oh, yes ! and kiss you, jist as I did that last time when I come away, and left you all alone on the butte, and me with my heart ’most broke.”

She had not seen him since that parting, over two years ago. It had been arranged that he should visit her twice a year; but when the first six months had expired an extra session of the Legislature of which he was a member had been called on account of Indian disturbances, and was to meet in a few days. The session had lasted over a month, and then had come the Navajo war, in which he had taken an active part, and then the nomination as delegate to Congress, and the necessity of remaining in Colorado to look after interests that were of vital importance. So all visits had been omitted, and his final appearance to claim his bride had been delayed a month; but at last he was coming!

Every night since she had left him she had, as she had promised him she would, read a little from the book he had given her, and which she now held in her hand. She remembered with what difficulty she had been able to make out the meaning of many of the words when she had first attempted its perusal. It was nearly three hundred years old, and printed in type that was strange to her inexperienced eyes; but she had persevered, and even then she had managed to read and understand the words of wisdom with which the little book abounded. Now she knew it by heart. There was not a page that was not familiar to her; but every time she brought the words before her eyes she discovered some thought that had never before been revealed to her.

She opened the book and began to read; but although it was easy enough for her now—for she had read almost every spare moment of her time since she had left Colorado—the thoughts excited by the knowledge that within twenty days at farthest she would see the man she loved, caused her mind to wander somewhat from the subject

before her. Nevertheless, she persevered bravely, and had stopped to think of what she had just read, when a light knock at the door disturbed her. She rose and opened it, and admitted Theodora.

“I left your father in the library,” she said, “and I thought I would come and talk with you a few minutes. He has a great many letters to write, and some other business to do that will keep him up late.”

“You shall have the nicest chair in the room,” said Lal, pushing up one in front of the fire that was a mass of soft, yielding upholstery, and into which Theodora sank with an air of fatigue. “Now, put your feet on the fender and warm them well. That is what I do every night before I go to bed.” She replaced her book in the iron cabinet, and drew up her own chair in front of the fire.

“Oh, Lal !” said Theodora, after sitting a few moments in silence, “I am afraid I have done something very wrong, and that I am going to be very unhappy.”

Lal looked at her mother in utter astonishment. She could say nothing, for she had no idea upon which to base a word in the nature of a reply. She could only stare fixedly, waiting in eager expectancy for some explanation.

“I ought to have been content with the world of happiness that I had here in my own household, where every wish of my heart is law, where I am beloved, and where I love ; but I was not satisfied ; my mind has been trained in ways that caused me to feel that there was a wider domain at my feet than that of my own home, and one in which I could not only gain distinction, but benefit mankind. Perhaps in time this would have worn out, for we are so much the creatures of habit, and

I tried my utmost to crush the desires that had gotten possession of me ; but in an evil hour they were revived tenfold by an offer of a professorship of physiology in a medical college for women. I would not have taken this place if your father had advised me not to do so, but he saw what my wishes were, and he is so kind and generous, and he loves me so much, that he would interpose no objection.”

“ But he was willing for you to take it, was he not ? ”

“ Yes, he was willing.”

“ Then that is enough, I think.”

“ No, my dear, I think not. Perhaps you do not understand. He was willing for me to accept, but it was only because he thought I would be unhappy if he showed the least lack of approval. He sacrificed his own wishes in order that mine might be gratified.”

“ Ah, that is like him ! ”

“ Yes, it is like him.”

“ I suppose,” said Lal, with great earnestness, “ if you were to go to him now, without waiting one moment, and tell him that you had thought it all over, and that you had found out that you would be happier at home than in lecturing in a medical college, and that you would rather give your mind as well as your heart to him, and,” she added, rising from her chair and putting her arms around Theodora’s neck, “ to me, he would be very glad, would he not ? ”

“ Yes, dear, I am sure he would be very glad.”

“ Then go ! I will go with you—we will go together. He loves us better than he does all the rest of the world.”

“ But I have accepted the professorship, and I have an answer acknowledging the receipt of my letter, and stating that the lectures will begin week after next.”

“Can you not, dear, take back your letter?”

“No, I think not.”

“But you can give up this place. What do you care for teaching medicine to women when you have father and me to look after? Besides, if you are busy in a medical college you cannot go to Washington with him this winter.”

“That is true, and he wants me to go with him. He has laid all his plans for himself and me. He looks forward with delight to seeing me at the head of his house, and he will be awfully disappointed if I do not go.”

“Give it up, dear—oh, give it up!” cried Lal.

“It will make me ridiculous if I do. People will say I do not know my own mind.”

“Let them say what they please! You will have him. Better be ridiculous than make him and yourself miserable.”

“Yes, yes!” cried Theodora, bursting into tears. “I know that—oh, I know it well! But then I have been brought up in such a way that these things have a hold on me that I cannot shake off. Till I met your father I thought I should never marry, but that I should give my whole life to science; and then he came, and I loved him, and for a time I thought I loved him more than I did my books and my studies. I was honest in that, God knows I was! But I now see that I cannot shake off the old love, do what I may. There is a constant spirit of unrest in me that I cannot resist. I have tasted of the fruit of the tree of knowledge, and I must go on eating it all my life.”

“I do not think I understand,” said Lal, very slowly, and as though speaking to herself. “You do not mean to say that you love all these things about such matters

as electricity and dead animals better than you do my father and your husband?"

"I don't know. I love him with all my heart; but, God help me!" she added, bitterly, "I am afraid the heart is all crushed out of me. I ought to be willing to go to him, as you say, and tell him that my world is in him, but I cannot do it."

"I am very sorry," said Lal. "I have many thoughts in my mind that I cannot speak, for, you see, I do not know enough yet to say what I feel. But if I was John's wife I should think that I could not be anything else, for everything that took me away from him would make me just that much less his wife. I should think every day of all that he had done for me, and I should feel that, if I was to live thousands of years, I could never pay him back. It is not much that women can do for men but love them, and I do not see how teaching all these things in a college is going to make father any happier, except it is just because he thinks you like it. But after a while he will get tired of that. Here in my book—the one that John gave me—I read that men are different from women in that one thing—that unless women try to keep their love they lose it. A woman has to be always trying to keep the man loving her. That is what I read. If father was to stop loving you it would be very bad, would it not?"

"If he was to cease loving me I should not care to live."

"Well, that is what it will come to. There is nothing in that book that is not true. Not one single word," she added, with a strong emphasis on each syllable. "I think I will read you just two or three lines, and then you will see. There is great danger—oh, yes, very

great danger ! But this will show you, and then you will know what to do.”

She opened the cabinet, and taking out the book, soon found what she wanted, and read as follows :

“ ‘ Let me tell you, my dear child, now that you are about to marry the man you love, that however much he may be worthy of your affection, and however much he may adore you, that man is by nature inconstant, and that Stephen does not differ from others of his sex in that respect, whatever he may say to you. It is necessary that you should always be on the alert, ever watchful in order to keep his love for you as fresh and as intense as it now is. If, therefore, in the years to come you should fail to exhibit toward him the same tenderness and concentrated devotion that you feel to-day, there will be danger that the warm love that now fills his heart may, little by little, grow cold.’ ”

“ Lal, my darling, you have taught me something to-night,” exclaimed Theodora—“ something for me to think over ! Every word of that is true, and I, a physiologist, as I have called myself, have never known it till now !”

“ Let the single women and the widows give the lectures,” laughed Lal, in triumph over her victory, “ if women must lecture ; but for us who are married, or going to be very soon, there are better things, and the best of them is keeping the love of our husbands. Oh, I was sure the book would set you right !”

“ Good-night, dear. You are Geoffrey’s child, and you are my friend. Kiss me,” embracing her as she spoke. “ Now go to bed, for I have kept you up much later than is usual for you.”

“ Oh, I have to write to John yet, and then I must

copy a page out of my book ! I am copying it all, so that he will see how much I think of it. See ! I am now at the three hundred and tenth page, and there are only nine more left. It will all be done by the time he gets here. It is a great book ; it saved me, and now I think it will save you."

CHAPTER VIII.

THEODORA DECIDES.

ALTHOUGH Rachel Meadows thought it due to her dignity and her peace of mind to resign from the executive committee of the "United Women of America," she could not, upon reflection, find that she was yet prepared to altogether abandon the movement in favor of the advancement of women. She had taken great interest in the organization of various schemes tending to extend the field of labor for her sex. There was a woman's art-school, where girls were taught needlework, painting on canvas, porcelain, etc., wood-carving and designing patterns for carpets and other textile fabrics. There was a commercial college for women, where the pupils were indoctrinated into the mysteries of bookkeeping, and thus qualified for positions as clerks in mercantile and other establishments; and then last, but by no means least in her estimation, was the "Martha Washington Medical College for Women."

This institution had been founded with a great flourish of trumpets by a meeting in Chickering Hall, with a bishop and fifty or more persons on the platform, among them being clergymen, physicians, lawyers, capitalists, and a very few professional agitators. Nobody except a dozen or so narrow-minded doctors had made any active opposition to the movement. Chief among them was a certain Dr. McPheeters, a little, sour-visaged, and still

more sour-souled individual, of whom a prominent and witty member of the profession had said that he never met him without involuntarily writing a prescription for twenty drops of essence of peppermint on a lump of sugar. This shining light had never contributed an idea, or even a surgical instrument, to the science of medicine, but his opinion, from the oracular manner in which it was delivered, his confident reference to the "dignity of the profession," and the assurance that Hippocrates, if alive, "would hang his honored head in very shame," went for something with certain of his medical brethren. Dr. McPheeters headed a little band, who resolved that they would not countenance the entrance of women into the ranks of the profession. They declared that not only would they not consult with them, but that they would not consult with any other physician who recognized them. This, the *fulmen Jovi* of the stagnant medical man, had been hurled, but it did not seem to have had much effect, for not only were there several prominent physicians on the platform at the meeting, but there were many more equally as noted in the body of the audience. All these were men that had made their mark on the science, and whose names were well known wherever medical books were read. Any one of them had done more toward the advancement of medicine or surgery than Dr. McPheeters and all his coadjutors put together, and as a consequence each was correspondingly hated by the "stagnants." For it is a lamentable fact that there is in the medical profession a small class of do-nothings, or at best men who do nothing but routine work that has become automatic with them, and who force down to the utmost of their power those that show the slightest spark of originality in their composition.

The physician that does not believe with them on any question of medical science is conceived to be a humbug, or even a fraud. "The man," said McPheeters, at the Minerva Club, "who holds the opinion that women should be allowed to practise medicine must necessarily be a fool, and is probably a knave. I would not consult with such a man; I would have no confidence in the correctness, or even the honesty, of any opinion he might give." However, the meeting took place, the medical college was organized, and was soon afterward, with an ample endowment and well equipped in the matters of laboratories, museum, and all needful appliances for medical teaching, in the full tide of a successful experiment. For this result Rachel Meadows was in a great measure responsible. She had managed to interest many persons eminent in the several walks of life and possessed of ample means in the welfare of the college, and had not only obtained their influence, but what was of equal, if not of more importance, their pecuniary contributions.

Rachel was the daughter of Commodore Meadows, of the United States Navy, who, after having served faithfully, was retired from active service on arriving at the age of sixty-two, and had soon afterward died in disgust and chagrin—so his friends declared—at being laid on the shelf like a useless piece of apparatus, when he felt he was just as good as ever. He had left beside his widow only one child, Rachel. He had not seen much of her, for the greater part of his forty-six years of service had been passed at sea. No sooner would he return from one cruise than he was ordered on another, and thus he had only been with his family at intervals of three or four years, and only for a few weeks at a time, till a year before his death. Perhaps matters in this respect would

have been different had there been a little more congeniality between the Commodore and his wife. But he was a natural born tyrant, whose innate tendencies had been fostered by his education. His house was his quarter-deck, and everybody in it was, he conceived, as much under his command as were the sailors who manned his ships. He always addressed his wife as "Madam," and any difference of opinion with him was either insubordination or mutiny, to be punished with the utmost rigor of naval law, if only the laws of the State of New York had permitted. Upon one occasion he had locked his wife in a dark closet, and had kept her for twenty-four hours on bread and water. This little exercise of marital authority had nearly cost the Captain, as he was then, his commission; for Mrs. Meadows, who was by no means a patient Griselda, and who could generally manage to hold her own with him in any wordy conflicts that might be going on, had complained to the Secretary of the Navy, and this official had gone so far as the preferment of the charge of "conduct unbecoming an officer and a gentleman," with six distinct specifications, alleging water-throwing up through pinching to imprisonment. But Mrs. Meadows had gone to Washington, and had begged so effectually with the authorities for his forgiveness, and had declared that she would not testify against her husband before any court-martial that might be ordered, that they had made a virtue of necessity, and had ordered him to sea.

Rachel was at that time about fifteen years of age, and had no more idea that woman was being oppressed by the male portion of humanity than such as she obtained from observing her father's conduct to her mother. She knew very little of men outside of the family circle, but

that little rather inclined her to view them with feelings of fear and contempt. And it must be said that Mrs. Meadows, by her example and precept, encouraged this conception, so far, at least, as concerned those men who "went down to the sea in ships" belonging to the naval establishment of the United States. From her intimate acquaintance with Lieutenant, Lieutenant-Commander, Commander, Captain, and Commodore Meadows, she had, after the manner of some of her sex, jumped at the conclusion that all naval officers were brutes. "There isn't one of them," she had said to Rachel, "who wouldn't hit you on the head with a marlin-spike if he dared."

"What is a marlin-spike, mamma?" Rachel had inquired.

"It's a rolling-pin, my dear, that the cook uses to make his beastly duff with on board ship."

"And what is duff, mamma?"

"Duff is a vile compound, made of flour and water and lard, that they feed out to the sailors on Sundays. Now, don't please ask me any more questions about those nasty ship-things."

"Promise me one thing, Rachel," said her mother one day, after she and the Commodore had had a rather severer tussle with the English language than usual, "that you will never marry a naval officer. Not even after I'm dead."

"Oh, there is not any danger of that, mamma, for I don't know any, and they are not likely to come to the house!"

But soon after that, when she was scarcely eighteen, one *did* come to the house, and not only once, but several times. Rachel learned very soon, after making the ac-

quaintance of Ensign Middleton, that all naval officers were not like her father. She did not exactly love him, but she liked him very much, and she would probably have married him on his return from the cruise on which he went only shortly after she got to know him, had he not been killed under Farragut at the battle of Mobile Bay.

Then Rachel took to hard study, and from hearing a series of lectures by Miss Richardson, and by reading an essay of John Stuart Mill's on the "Emancipation of Woman," she gradually, very much to the disgust of her father, and somewhat to that of her mother also, imbibed ideas of woman's duties, responsibilities, and rights, which, as the Commodore said, made his hair stand on end. "It's the most demoralizing exhibition the world has ever seen," he said one evening, after he and Rachel had been discussing several of the possibilities of the future of the sex—"doctors, lawyers, clergymen, or 'clergywomen,' I suppose you'll call them, postmistresses, and the Lord only knows how many other things. After a while I suppose they'll be taking to the navy and wanting to command steam frigates! The Lord be with them! when that time comes *I'd* steer devilish clear of them, I know, unless I wanted to go to the bottom. And to think a daughter of mine should be aiding and abetting by her example all these turnings of the world upside down! Running with a lot of short-haired women, getting all sorts of notions stuck in her head about the 'tyranny of man,' and the 'equality of the sexes,' and other damned nonsense. This is your work, madam," turning to his wife, who was engaged with a game of solitaire. "I left my daughter with you to educate and bring up with ideas befitting the

daughter of an officer and a gentleman. Yes, madam, a gentleman, although you did do your best to have me tried on the charge that I wasn't, and this is what you've made of her. She'll be wanting trousers next. Now, you listen to me !” again addressing poor Rachel, who had done nothing but ask his permission to study Latin and Greek ; “ I'll have no Latin and Greek learned by any daughter of mine ; and if you don't stop going with that Richardson old maid, and others of that kind, and get your mind on some useful things that women ought to know and that they don't, I'll not leave you one cent, and you can get your living by lecturing, if you want to.”

Mrs. Meadows only looked up for a moment while this tirade was being delivered, and had then gone on with her game. Tears had come into Rachel's eyes, but she wiped them away, and a stern spirit of determination took possession of her. The next day she began the study of elocution from a lady who had once been an accomplished actress. Then she worked harder than ever to master all the phases of the woman question, and finally she undertook to learn astronomy and to learn it as thoroughly as was possible, with the view of making her living by teaching it and delivering popular lectures upon some of its wonders. She had gone to Professor Symonds, who had a well-furnished observatory, and she had become his pupil. Five years of unremitting labor had made her an accomplished astronomer, so that the old professor, her teacher, boasted of her as the best pupil he had ever had. About that time her father died. He had been as good as his word, and had left his entire estate to his wife.

Although Mrs. Meadows was perfectly willing to be

at the expense of Rachel's maintenance, the girl would hear of nothing of the kind. She declared that she was perfectly able to support herself, and that she intended to do so. She at once announced in a neighboring city a course of lectures on astronomy, in which the great members of the solar system, as well as the laws that govern their motions, were to be described in accordance with the principles of the highest science. These were delivered, and being well illustrated with apparatus, diagrams, and stereopticon pictures, proved remarkably successful. Indeed, her lecture on the Sun received complimentary notices from several eminent astronomers, both in this country and in Europe. Then she travelled throughout the United States and Canada, attended only by her maid, and preceded by her man of business, received everywhere with respect, and making a solid reputation and an ample pecuniary profit. The year previous to her introduction to the reader she had been induced to prepare a couple of lectures on the woman question, and to start out on a crusade for the purpose of influencing public opinion in favor of the demands that a few progressive members of the sex were advancing. This campaign, however, had not resulted so well as the other. She found her own sex indifferent to the subject of their rights, and this fact interfered very materially with the size of her audiences. It was at one of these lectures that the Hon. Tom Burton had first met her.

Rachel's efforts to get her own living in a respectable way had, as is usual in similar cases, been accompanied by slights from many of her fashionable friends. The idea that one of their set should descend to anything partaking of the character of work was an insult to their par-

venu souls that was not to be forgiven. Her position, so far as the age and respectability of her family were concerned, was not excelled by that of any other person in the city of New York. Her father was a direct descendant of that Baron Maedu who, in conjunction with others of his peers, had brought King John of England to terms, and her mother was a Pelham. Yet Miss Sorby, whose grandfather had driven a custom-house cart, and whose grandmother had kept an apple-stand in the Bowery, turned up her aristocratic little nose—or rather added to the inclination toward the stars that Nature had given it—whenever Rachel's name was mentioned in her presence. And Miss Boggs, whose own father had begun life as the deck-hand of a ferry-boat, looked out of her carriage, with its armorial bearings, and gazed at her former acquaintance with a stony stare that would have done honor to Stoozjunkare.

Rachel, however, cared little for the slights of such people. She was entirely capable of holding her own in the great battle of life, and to give blows as well as to receive them. She therefore went about her work with that assiduity and independence of character which could not but attract the attention of many worthy and influential people. She was not very extravagant in her demands for the recognition of her sex, and on several points she had been convinced against her will, or rather had imagined herself convinced, till she had had time to reflect fully on the subjects, and then doubts had arisen that, like Banquo's ghost, would not go down. And though she had acted with the "United Women of America," she had done so not because her heart was in the work, but because the hearts of several of her best friends were in it, and she did not care to desert them.

But her heart *was* in all that concerned the education of women in contradistinction to those points that were related to their so-called political rights. She thought that woman should be allowed to do anything in the way of getting her livelihood, or of mental improvement, that she chose to do, though she recognized the fact that some occupations and some studies were better suited to her than others. But this was, she contended, a matter of which woman alone should be the judge. If she undertook work for which she was not qualified, the world would very soon find it out. She had the right to make the trial unrestrained by legal or social restrictions. If she failed, so much the worse for her ; if she succeeded, fresh fields for labor were opened to her, and she and society would in the end be the gainers.

It was with such feelings that she had undertaken the work of organizing the "Martha Washington Medical College for Women." She had succeeded in getting together a fairly good faculty, in which men and women were in about equal proportions. The professorship of physiology had, however, been very unsatisfactorily filled, and she had for several months been on the lookout for somebody who could perform the duties of the chair with more credit and usefulness than the existing incumbent, who was only holding on till a successor should be found. Then Rachel had read an account in the *Journal of Physiological Science* of Theodora's experiments in evolution and in regard to the velocity of the nerve-force. Inquiry had resulted in the discovery of the fact that the author was now the wife of Mr. Geoffrey Moultrie, the wealthy and distinguished gentleman who had done more than any other man in the country to subjugate the forces of nature and to over-

come the physical obstacles that impede the advance of civilization. She knew that Mrs. Moultrie was one of the most fashionable women of the city of New York, and for a while she despaired of obtaining her aid toward the furtherance of medical instruction for women. Moreover, she came to the conclusion that since her marriage Mrs. Moultrie had given up all scientific studies, and that, therefore, her heart could not have been very deeply in her work. At first she thought she would ascertain for herself by a personal interview just how matters stood, and then her natural timidity—for, notwithstanding the fact that she could face an audience from the rostrum, she never did so without fear and trembling—stood in the way, and she resolved that it would be better to bring the subject before the board of trustees, and to appoint Mrs. Moultrie to the chair without further ceremony. There could not possibly be any grounds for offence by such a procedure, and the recipient of the honor would decide for herself, uninfluenced by extraneous solicitations.

The letter announcing Theodora's election had been sent on the afternoon of the day on which the committee of the "United Women of America" had presented themselves at Moultrie's meeting, and at which Rachel had advocated the claims of her sex to political advancement. The views expressed by Moultrie had quite effectually dissipated any idea she may have had that his wife would accept the appointment tendered her. Although he had said nothing definite, she was irresistibly led to the conclusion, by what he did not say, that he was opposed to the entrance of women into any domain hitherto regarded as exclusively appertaining to the male sex. It was with great surprise and delight, therefore, that

she had received, on the morning of the election, Theodora's answer of acceptance, with a request for an early interview. She would have called at once had not matters of immediate importance engaged her attention. These, connected as they were with her retirement from the executive committee of the "United Women of America," kept her busy all that day, and it was therefore not until the following afternoon that she was able to visit Theodora at her residence.

Theodora had thought very seriously of the whole subject since her conversation with Lal of the night before. She had, when they parted, nearly made up her mind to recall her letter of acceptance, even if such an act should lay her open to the charge of instability. It seemed to her, then, that the happiness of herself and her husband hung in the balance, and that persistence in her undertaking would tilt the beam on the wrong side. But when she awoke in the morning she found the reasons for acceptance as strong in her mind as they had ever been, and those against it greatly weakened in force and vividness. She watched Moultrie with all the keenness that women situated as was she bring to bear on their perceptive faculties, and she could see no signs of discontent with the choice she had made. Indeed, he several times alluded to the subject, extolling her flow of language, her knowledge of the subject she was to teach—a knowledge that was not, as he said, obtained altogether from books, but which had been acquired by her own observations and experiments, and predicting for her a success such as no woman had ever yet obtained in the domain of physiology.

He bade her remember how on the revival of letters and of learning women had taken a position among the

very foremost ; how they had taught theology, and had brought converts by the thousand into the bosom of the Church ; how they had indulged in controversies with learned doctors of the opposite sex, whom they had often put to confusion ; how they had publicly supported theses on doctrinal subjects ; how they had filled chairs of philosophy, law, and medicine in great universities ; how they had talked in Latin before the popes, and written excellent verses in good Greek.

“ I should not be at all surprised, my dear Theodora,” he had said to her, from the depths of his dressing-room, “ if you become in medical teaching what the young Bolognese young lady was in law. Perhaps you are familiar with the instance. It is very fresh in my own mind, because I only learned of it yesterday. I am studying up in all matters relating to women, for I may be called upon to make a speech in Congress on the subject, and a display of learning has an immense effect in that body. Well, this young woman”—here there was a spluttering and a splashing of water, as though he were being drowned, and it was several seconds before he recovered his breath sufficiently to go on. “ As I was saying,” he at length resumed, “ this young woman, who appears to have flourished during the thirteenth century, devoted herself to the study of the Latin language and of the laws. At the age of twenty-three she pronounced a funeral oration—rather a bad beginning, I think—in Latin in the Cathedral of Bologna, that was regarded as the most astonishing piece of oratory of the time. At the age of twenty-six she took the degree of Doctor of Laws, and began publicly to expound the Institutes of Justinian, and at thirty her great reputation caused her to be appointed to a professorship, and she taught law to

large classes of students from all parts of the civilized world. She joined the charms and accomplishments of a woman to all the knowledge of a man. But such, adds the chronicler, was the power of her eloquence, that her beauty was only admired when her tongue was silent. I am sorry to say," he added, after another series of splashings, "that her name is not given."

She was astounded. Was he laughing at her? For a moment she felt inclined to be a little indignant, but then she reflected that he saw the humorous side of many subjects that he regarded seriously, and that a bantering tone was with him no indication of a lack of grave appreciation.

"The instance is an unfortunate one, I am afraid," she said, laughing. "If such good looks as I have are only to be noticed when I am not lecturing, please, sir, keep away from me when I am at the college. And as to her name: if she had been a man the whole world would, even at this day, have known it. Unfortunately, all the printing-presses were in the hands of men, and they made no record of this prodigy's name."

"Ah, my dear, there I have you!" he exclaimed. "This young woman, you will please to remember, flourished in the thirteenth century, and printing was not invented till the fifteenth. Some women, jealous of her distinction, obliterated all traces of her name, though they were not able to suppress the records of her deeds. But, then, there was Modesta di Pozzo di Zozzi, and Cassandra Fidele, and Giulia Frivulzio, and Spotta Nogarolla, and—"

"For Heaven's sake, Geoffrey, where did you pick up all those names?" exclaimed Theodora, as he came into her room, partly dressed. "Are you making fun of

me," she continued, in a more serious tone, "or are you merely trying to astonish me with your learning?"

"As I said, I have been reading up for my speech. Fancy the looks of admiration and awe that will overspread the faces of the honorable members from Hempfield, and Pitt's Four Corners, and Pig-in-a-Poke when I rattle off those names as readily as though I had known them all my life! Laughing at you, Dory! My dear child, I may laugh at you sometimes, but not in connection with so weighty a matter as your professorship."

"But you have apparently been giving me reasons for accepting, and at the same time speaking of the subject as though it were all a joke."

"My dear Dory," said Moultrie, "I thought I made it clear to you the other day how seriously I regarded the matter, and that it is one that you must decide for yourself. I then told you that I would support you loyally in the decision you made, and I am now beginning to do so. If I show more than my usual hilarity in my attempts to sustain you in your new *rôle*, you must attribute it to the fact that I feel cheerful and contented with what you have done."

"Then you advise me to accept. Oh, Geoffrey, if you would only say that you do, my doubts would all be removed!"

"But I cannot advise you to accept, my dear. If I were to give my advice, it would be not to accept; but this is one of those things that I think should be absolutely left to your own judgment. I know what your inclinations are, and I should be very unhappy if they did not have full opportunity to be gratified. But why discuss the question again? It is settled finally, and you are Professor of Physiology in the 'Martha Washington

Medical College for Women.' It is already *un fait accompli*, and I wish you all the success which I am confident you will deserve."

"I could resign."

"If you were to resign from conviction that you had committed an error in accepting, that would be one thing. Your resignation to oblige me would be quite another thing."

"But there may be some points that you see and that I do not see, and if you were to explain to me, would convince me that I had committed an error. Oh, Geoffrey, is it not a part of your duty to guide me when I come to you, as I do now, and ask you to aid me to decide aright? You are older than I, you know the world more thoroughly, and, above all else, you know your own heart. If I thought that, by taking this place, I should lose one jot or tittle of your affection, do you think I would ever enter the college? What are professorships or colleges, or the whole female sex to me compared to your love? Geoffrey, my husband, tell me what I am to do!" She threw her arms around his neck, and buried her face in his breast. "You are all the world to me," she said, as he kissed her head, and drew her to him; "I am in distress, and I come to you in my trouble. Help me!"

For a moment the words were on his lips, "Let the college go to the devil, and stay with me!" but it was only for a moment, and again in his own loving but determined way he hardened his heart against an appeal that was almost agonizing in its intensity. He knew that she wished to take the professorship, and he was resolved that she should submit to no sacrifice of herself in the matter. He was very obstinate when he had once made

up his mind to any particular course, and sometimes became blinded, or at least indifferent, to all influences that were against any decision he might have made. Doubtless this characteristic had been of vast service to him in the conduct of the great engineering works he had accomplished. He had great faith in himself. In regard to the question before him, he had grave doubts of the advisability of his wife's acceptance. The idea of her appearing in public as a lecturer, even though only before a class composed of members of her own sex, was unpleasant to him, and the knowledge that the performance of her duties would necessarily divide her sympathies and create in her interests different from those that personally concerned him, was painful. He had known all along that the simple statement of his wish, that she should refuse the proposition of the trustees of the medical college, would be sufficient for her ; but he thought he knew equally well that in such a case she would experience ceaseless regret, and he could not bring himself to speak words that would convey the idea that he was unduly exercising his authority. If there was any sacrifice to be made, he intended himself to be the victim, not the woman whom he loved better than himself.

But now she had, as it were, thrown herself at his feet, and implored him to put his foot on her neck. No abnegation of self could have been more profound than hers, no sacrifice more complete. She was already a martyr in spite of him, for no material sacrifice could cost her more pain than the mental immolation she was now suffering. Yet, somehow or other, he failed to comprehend the grandness of her heroism, or, even in its entirety, the helplessness that had characterized her appeal. He could not dissociate in his mind her self-

denial and reliance on him with her longing to get once more into the traces of the student and the lecturer. He did not question the sincerity with which she had plead with him, but he did doubt her thorough understanding of herself. He was fully persuaded that, were she through his influence to give up the idea of teaching in a medical college, the time would come when, if she did not openly, she would in her heart, reproach him for any mental inaction or regrets that she might suffer. Strange that he did not see that in her supplication to him for help she had placed herself entirely under his guidance, and had made him responsible for all the results of his failure to give her the aid she asked, and which, as her husband, he had no right to refuse! Had she come to him of her own accord, and said, "I prefer you to all the colleges in the world. My interest is in you, is one and indivisible. I am convinced that a married woman has her own home to supervise, and not the education of other women; that if she attempts both, one or the other will suffer, and I, therefore, have decided to refuse the appointment," he would have rejoiced beyond measure. But she had never said this, or anything like it; on the contrary, he knew very well—and she did not deny it—that she was wrapped up in her studies in physiology, and that she would be delighted to teach; and that however much she might be willing to be guided by him—and this he did not doubt—any action of his looking to her resignation would be a disappointment to her, to be borne cheerfully and loyally, doubtless, but nevertheless a disappointment, even though she was now unconscious of the liability to any such result.

Besides, he had thought that, as a mere matter of sound policy that would eventuate in good to both him and her,

it would be better that she should make the attempt to, as it were, serve two masters. No lessons were so effective as those of personal experience. She would find out for herself, and no great harm could be done by the experiment. But yet, never had he been so greatly moved as by the few simple words she had addressed to him. Here was one woman, at least, that loved her husband, and was willing—anxious, to give up her most cherished desire to please him, or even at his dictation, whether reasonable or unreasonable. He had never loved her so fondly as at that moment. For, like most men of tender and loving hearts, though he did not desire that a woman should sacrifice herself for him, he did desire that she should be willing to do so. His own wife had shown herself equal to the emergency, and, so far as he could bestow it, she should receive her reward.

In all that he had said relative to the success of women in the domain of learning, and of his confidence in her abilities, he had said what he believed to be true, and he said it honestly, in order to encourage her to do her best, and to remove from her mind any lingering idea that might lurk there that he did not yield a hearty support to her wishes. Still, he could not, without doing violence to his principles, advise her to accept. He felt that to do so was entirely beyond his power; but while he was thus prohibited by strong conscientious scruples from taking an active part for or against the proposed measure, he was equally strongly determined not only that he would interpose no obstacles, but that he would do all in his power to make her path clear, and to give her all the moral and physical aid she might require.

“My darling,” he said, when she had finished her invocation to him, and was standing trembling in his arms,

“there is nothing you are ever likely to do that could lessen the hold that you have on my heart. If I knew of anything that could come between us—if I thought for one moment that your acceptance of this professorship would endanger our love, then it would be my duty to speak, not only to give you my advice, but to beg you to refuse the appointment. Now, my dear child,” he continued, smiling, “I see that I must exercise the little authority which the laws of the State of New York and the customs of good society have left to a husband. It is my will and pleasure that you shall do in this matter exactly as you wish, acting entirely from the impulse of your own heart, controlled only by your own reason. If you wish to please me, you will do this without further discussion, remembering that I shall always be ready to assist you faithfully to the utmost of my ability. Now, then, as I am scarcely in a fit condition to appear at the breakfast-table, perhaps you will allow me to finish my toilet.”

No more was said, and Theodora made up her mind that the Polish ancestor of Tyscovus knew little of any other man than himself. That afternoon Rachel Meadows called. The conference was eminently satisfactory. All the details of the matter were fully explained, and it was arranged that Theodora should on the following day visit the college on a tour of observation, and that her lectures should begin on the twentieth of the month.

CHAPTER IX.

A JOKE OR A CRIME ?

MRS. SINCOTE had one peculiarity, which, while it sometimes gave pleasure to herself and others, more frequently caused annoyance to all concerned, and sometimes real distress. She was fond of practical jokes when she was the perpetrator. A pleased victim has never yet been observed, except in those rare cases in which jocose old gentlemen have presented their scapegrace sons or nephews with large family Bibles, with the admonition to "search the Scriptures," which doing after several years of continued ungodliness they have found to contain one hundred dollar notes between every two leaves. Or those other still rarer subjects, physicians or lawyers, perhaps, whose patients or clients indignantly refuse to pay the moderate *honoraria* suggested, but who shy a stocking or a night-cap at the "sawbones" or "limb of the law," exclaiming, "There, you murderer," or, "There, you shark, take that !" and which on being explored is found to contain a check for five or ten thousand dollars. Or those superlatively rare instances in which an infatuated lover is led by his Dulcinea to believe that she is devotedly attached to his rival, and who one day receives a note requesting him to call immediately at the lady's house on business of great importance, and who going, finds her dressed in bridal array, surrounded by her family, and the parson present, with book in hand, and

only waiting his arrival to begin the ceremony that is to unite him to his jovial mistress, who all the time has been dead in love with him, and has been studying his character, when he has thought himself overwhelmed with misfortune.

Moultrie had tried with his usual persistency to break her of this habit, but had only so far succeeded as to secure immunity for himself and the members of his individual family. She therefore understood that he, his wife, and daughter were sacred, and that if she ventured upon any annoying "pleasantry" in his household she would feel the effects of his displeasure. He had extended his positive prohibition to the practice being indulged in at all; but as he was not ubiquitous or omniscient, she felt herself entirely safe to perpetrate her tricks upon the unwary, not even sparing her own mother and daughter.

The morning after the election she had gone to Moultrie's to congratulate him on his success, a full account of which she had read in the morning papers. The dowager did not feel equal to the work of going out so early in the day, but sent a very loving letter to her son, in which she gave full expression to her feelings, and indulged the hope that he felt a due sense of the responsibility that had been laid on his shoulders.

When Mrs. Sincote arrived Moultrie and his wife and daughter were still at the breakfast-table. Instead of at once going into the room where they were assembled, she announced to the servant that she would first go up to Theodora's boudoir, in order to take a look at a portrait of Moultrie that had come home from the artist the day before. She accordingly ascended the staircase to the next floor, and having sufficiently examined and ad-

mired the portrait, which stood on an easel in front of the chair which Theodora usually occupied when she was reading or was at leisure, she started to go down-stairs. On her way she passed by the open door of Lalage's room, and without stopping to think, or, perhaps, with the consciousness that she had the freedom of the house, she entered the apartment, and gave a glance around at its luxurious furniture and arrangements. Almost at once her attention was attracted by a letter that lay on the table, and that was directed in Lalage's handwriting to "John Tyscovus, Esq., Planters' House, St. Louis, Mo." It was the letter that he had requested Lal to write, and that she had left unsealed, in order that she might give him the latest intelligence of her father and his movements, that she had intended to get at breakfast, and add in a postscript.

Now, Julia Sincote was not a dishonorable woman at that particular time, although, perhaps, not an over-scrupulous one. She picked up the letter, read the superscription, and then laid it down again, experiencing no temptation to pry any further into its character. If she could have obtained a knowledge of its contents without being obliged to descend to the meanness of opening and reading it, she would doubtless have been glad. But she felt no desire to do so at such an expense to her sense of decency and propriety as she would have thereby incurred. She sighed, however, as she thought of her love for the man to whom the letter was directed, and then she turned away.

Or, rather, she was just in the act of turning away when she saw close to the letter an open sheet containing writing. Supposing it to be an exercise or a composition, she took it up and began to read it. Of course

a scrupulous woman, or one with the fine sense of delicacy that Julia Sincote, from her breeding and associations, ought to have possessed, would have no more thought of reading an open writing not specially intended for her eye than she would one enclosed in an envelope.

Now, as we know, Lal had, after Theodora's visit of the previous night, set herself to work at her letter to Tyscovus and to the copying of a page from her treasured book, as was her custom. She was a very methodical and practical young woman, and to have omitted any part of her daily routine of work would have caused her no inconsiderable amount of unpleasant feeling. She had, therefore, accomplished her task, although it was long after midnight when she got through and laid herself down to sleep. It was this sheet, containing the extract from the book, which Julia Sincote had in her hand, and which she began to read. It was a sheet of note-paper, such as all the other extracts had been written on, and of the same kind as that Lal used in her correspondence. When the work was completed, she would, she thought, have all the sheets bound together in handsome style, and then she intended to present the volume to Tyscovus. As the reader knows, this was the three hundred and tenth page, and there were only nine more, and then her work would be done.

As Julia Sincote read, a strange expression passed over her face; but she went on, apparently fascinated with the knowledge she was receiving. When she had finished, she laid the sheet upon the table—though she still held it between her fingers—while she stood almost breathless with amazement at what she had perused. Again she examined the sheet, and then suddenly she

burst into a laugh that was almost loud enough to have been heard by the people in the breakfast-room. "1574!" she exclaimed—"three hundred years ago. Why, it's only an extract from that precious book of hers, which she keeps so religiously under lock and key; and the date—'November 16th'—this very day three hundred years ago! It would be a good joke," she continued; "I think I will do it." She stood for a moment, as though undecided whether or not to follow the suggestion. Then, with a little heightened color, as though blushing for the remote possibilities of her act, she dipped her pen into the ink and changed the figure "5" of the year-date to an "8," so that it was "1874." Then she took the letter from the envelope and replaced it with the sheet, which she folded in exactly the same manner. The letter she held in her hand for a few moments, apparently in doubt as to what disposition to make of it. Finally, without unfolding it, she placed it between the leaves of a photograph-album that lay on the table, and fastening the clasps, left the room, well satisfied with the success that had attended her operations. On the stairs she met Lalage, who was coming up in some degree of haste.

"Oh, Aunt Julia!" cried Lal, "is that you? I did not know you were in the house."

"I came in a few moments ago, and stole up-stairs quietly to take a private look at your father's portrait. It is an excellent likeness, as well as a lovely work of art."

"Yes, it is very much like him. I am only going to get a letter; I will be down again in a moment."

Lalage was so quick in her movement that she and Mrs. Sincote entered the breakfast-room together. After

a few words of greeting and congratulation between the latter and her brother and his wife, Lal produced her letter.

“I will go into the library, father,” she said, “and write what you have just told me.”

“And then,” laughed Moultrie, “the postscript, as is so often the case with women’s letters, will be the most important part. Perhaps you would not object if I wrote a little note to Tyscovus and put it into the envelope with your letter.”

“Not at all, father; I think that would be very nice, and that John will be glad to get a letter from you.”

“Very well, my dear. Then I will go with you and write it at once.”

The two left the room together. Julia, though trying to seem interested in what Theodora was talking about, had her attention mainly directed toward the adjoining room, as if expecting every moment that her joke would be detected. She was arranging in her mind the details of the defence she should be obliged to make, for now the consequences of her folly loomed up in large proportions before her, and she was quite sure that not only would Lal be indignant, but that Moultrie, finding that his most solemn injunctions relative to practical joking with members of his family had been disregarded, and that, too, in a manner so indelicate, would cause her to feel the effects of his wrath in a way that would be unpleasant to her. Several times she was on the point of going into the library, acknowledging her act, and asking forgiveness; but the fear of Moultrie, and the fact that she would be obliged to admit that she had tampered with a letter not her own, restrained her. Yes, she

would wait, she thought, till the explosion came, and then she would get out of the scrape as well as she could.

But to her surprise there was no explosion. Everything seemed to be going on quietly. Finally she heard Moultrie say, "Now, my dear, put that with your letter. It will probably give him a clearer idea of the political situation than anything you can write." There was a short pause, and then Moultrie and Lal came from the room, the latter having the letter in her hand. It was closed. Evidently she had not read the sheet which had been substituted for her own, and Julia perceived that unless she spoke at once the deception would not be discovered till Tyscovus received the letter. But she was now terribly frightened. She had not supposed for a moment that the matter could go so far without discovery. Her joke had succeeded beyond her most sanguine expectations, and she saw that unless she revealed immediately the nature of the deception she had practised, it bid fair to become a serious affair, and possibly one reaching the proportions of a tragedy. Lal stood with the letter in her hand; Moultrie was talking with Theodora about some arrangements for the day. He was bidding her good-by; he approached Lal and kissed her. "Will you mail my letter for me, please?" she said. He took it, and still holding it in his hand, said "good-morning" to Julia, and left the room. "Don't put it into your pocket," Lal called after him. "If you do you will forget it." She followed him out into the hall, and stood by him while he put on his overcoat and gloves. Julia joined them; she had made up her mind to confess all, and to throw herself on the mercy of her brother and niece. Lal had retaken possession of the letter while

Moultrie was drawing on his gloves. "Now," she said, as he finished, and reached out his hand for the missive, "you will please to keep this in sight till you get to the letter-box. Hold it right so," she continued, raising his hand till it was on a level with his eyes, "and then you will be sure to see it." He laughed and turned toward the door. Now was Julia's last chance. The word "Stop!" was on her lips, her vocal organs were arranged for its enunciation, her chest inflated to give it emphasis, her hand raised for the accompanying gesture, when suddenly, as though it were a flash of lightning, an idea swept through her mind with a force and a vividness that almost stunned her. For a moment it seemed to her as though her heart had stopped beating; then her hand fell to her side, a great sigh escaped her, and she sank, as though utterly exhausted, to a chair that stood by her side. Then she heard the front door close, and Lal saying something to her in accents of alarm. She roused herself and looked about her. He was gone. It was too late now to stop him, even had she wished, and confession was out of the question, for the first seed of dishonor had been planted in her mind.

"It is nothing," she said in answer to Lal's inquiries; "I felt a little faint for a moment. It must have been because I drank no coffee this morning. Please don't trouble yourself," as Lal made a motion as though going for assistance. "It is all over. I will go into the library for a moment. Then, if you will order me a cup of tea it will be all that I shall require."

Lal walked by her aunt's side till she saw her seated in a large arm-chair, and then ringing the bell, gave directions to the servant in regard to the tea.

"Don't wait," said Mrs. Sincote. "You have your

studies to attend to, and I think I heard Mrs. Bowdoin go up-stairs a moment ago.”

She was anxious to get Lal out of the way. She wanted to think, and the presence of the woman she had wronged interfered with the easy course of her thoughts. Lal waited till the tea came, and then, seeing that there was no further need for her presence, left the room.

As soon as she was gone Julia began to consider very seriously the immediate and remote possibilities of the situation. Her act, originally intended as a piece of pleasantry to herself and a slight annoyance to her niece, had passed beyond the limits of a joke. It had become a crime, in which there was a certain amount of deliberation, and which every moment became more and more of an outrage. The letter was already mailed. It could not be recalled; she could, of course, confess her guilt, and thus neutralize the consequences of her offence; but she had already begun to take pleasure in the contemplation of the possible results, and, at any rate, so long as she held her tongue, no one would ever know that she had had anything to do with the deception of which two innocent persons would be the victims. And then if the result should be such as she now hoped for, and which, so far as she could perceive, was almost a necessity of the position of affairs, would it not be well worth all the mental suffering she might be called upon to endure? She had never before attempted anything of a character to call a blush to her cheek, and she was not, therefore, conversant with the feelings of a person accustomed to the perpetration of dishonorable acts. She had a vague idea—the result of information from books and plays—that the unpleasantness resulting from the prickings of conscience became less with each transgression,

and after many repetitions not only was no pain experienced, but that a positive pleasure was produced. This process was what she understood by "hardening in crime." Certainly, therefore, she was not a hardened criminal, and yet she did not experience any remorse at the contemplation of what she had done. On the contrary, her mind—now that she had recovered from the immediate effects of the shock due to the conversion of her joke into a crime, to which restoration the two cups of strong tea she had drunk had doubtless materially contributed—was well at ease both as regarded herself and the rest of the world. The thought of possible distress to Lal and Tyscovus never occurred to her; certainly not in any form or to such a degree as to cause her discomfort. That if everything succeeded according to her hopes there would be disappointment she well knew, accompanied, perhaps, by tears on one side and anger on the other, but that there would be any severe emotional disturbance she did not believe. Lal was young; she had pledged her faith to Tyscovus when she knew nothing of the world—not even her own mind—and hence could not be supposed to be capable of very keen suffering from a love-affair with a man from whom she had parted almost as soon as she had made his acquaintance, and whom she had not seen for more than two years.

As for Tyscovus, she was not prepared to form any very definite conclusions in regard to his probable course on receipt of the false letter. She knew very little of him personally, not having met him more than half a dozen times, and then not being the recipient of any marked attention from him. But she had been struck with his appearance and manner from the very first

moment that she had laid her eyes upon him, and it was a source of bitter regret to her when she learned, as she did soon afterward, that he was the accepted lover of her niece, then an ignorant and uncouth, though beautiful girl. What he could see in Lal beyond good looks she could not then perceive. Subsequently, though much against her will, she had been forced to acknowledge to herself that the girl was possessed of many attractions and of some qualities that were calculated to excite in her wholesome feelings of respect and of fear.

But to come back to Tyscovus : "What," she asked herself, "will he do when he reads the letter? Will he indignantly write for an explanation? Will he hurry on to New York and seek an interview with Lal, or will he, regarding the letter as a finality against which there is no appeal, accept the apparent situation, and preserve a dignified silence toward a woman worthy only of his contempt? If," she thought, "he should write or come, exposure must, of course, be the immediate consequence. Fortunately, there is nothing to implicate me, and they may wonder who is the perpetrator till they grow gray, and never suspect that I had a hand in it. Should he accept his dismissal in silence and remain absent from her, what then? That requires a good deal of consideration. She, finding that he does not come, or even write, will at first be surprised; then after a little while she will begin to think that he did not receive her letter, and she will write again. Then, of course, there will be a clear understanding between them, and all this will come to naught. I don't know how it will end. There are too many contingencies to make it safe to predict. Time alone can show.

"But how will it, in any event, benefit me? Is it at

all likely that I shall ever see him again? Ah!" she exclaimed, as an idea occurred to her, "he will be in Washington this next winter, and so will Geoffrey. It would be very easy for me to be there, and in all probability Lal will remain in New York. Yes, it might then be possible."

Julia Sincote was by no means a profound woman, but at the same time she was certainly not a fool. While not given to intellectual pursuits of any kind, rarely reading a book that required any considerable exercise of her thinking faculties, she had, by the use of sharp perceptive powers and abundant opportunities for observation, picked up a good stock of knowledge of contemporaneous events and of human nature. Moreover, she had for many years indulged in the reading of romances and other works of fiction, the chief interest of which centred upon intricate plots, and in reports of notable trials in various parts of the world in which deep-laid conspiracies were exposed. She had hence become, to a certain extent, familiar with the ways of the perpetrators and victims of crimes, and could predict with exactness what such or such a character would do under the particular fortunate or unfortunate circumstances in which he or she might be placed. She was bringing to bear on the present matter, therefore, a mind trained in the investigations of human nature when surrounded with difficulties and subjected to misfortunes. The fault in her mental processes was that they had been to a great extent constructed upon models that were not those of human nature at all, but of false, morbid, and impossible types, created by writers who mistook their vivid flights of imagination for descriptions of real character and potentiality. She accepted these incongruities of per-

sons and conduct as actualities, failing to perceive that the creators and writers had scarcely ever been consistent, and that unless they had caused the personages of their stories to do the very things which rational persons would not do, there would have been no ground for continuing to write.

She had never, in any of the many true and fictitious plots with which she was familiar, met with two such personages as her niece Lalage and Tyscovus. Neither had she come in contact with their counterparts in real life. But these facts did not disturb her very much. She recalled to mind incidents in several novels which were not essentially different from that which was now the subject of her meditations, and in which the most terrible confusion and disasters had resulted from false letters. In one instance the receiver of a forged letter, purporting to come from the woman he loved, had seized a pistol and blown his brains out. She shuddered a little as she thought of this, but she did not believe Tyscovus was the man to kill himself for the sake of a woman that he believed had deceived him. In another, the man who had, by a fraudulent communication, been brought to the belief that the woman he was about to marry had discarded him, had killed her that he thought had played him false. This was not like Tyscovus. She had no fear for Lal's life. In another, the woman whose false friend had alienated from her the affections of her lover had died gradually of a broken heart. "Well," she thought, "I don't believe Lal is that kind of a girl; but if she is, and I can gain his love, she must take the consequences."

There were many other similar events that had resulted from the misunderstandings of lovers, brought about by

interested parties acting dishonorably, that occurred to her as she sat thinking, her mental activity more than usually developed by the tea she had drunk ; but in none of them had the sufferers been possessed of the strong natures that she had reason to believe were inherent in Tyscovus and her niece. She knew enough of them both to be aware that whatever action either of them took would be marked by decision, honesty, generosity, and firmness, without any element of weakness being present ; but what that action would be she could not determine. As she had said before, time alone could do that ; and for the present all she had to do was to wait patiently and prudently for the consequences. The matter was out of her hands. She had thought the subject over with about as much thoroughness as she was capable of at that time, so she rose languidly from her semi-recumbent position in the deep arm-chair, and was on the point of leaving the room when Lalage entered.

“ I hope you are better, Aunt Julia,” she said. “ Yes, you look much better. I came to see if I could find the copy I made last night from my book. I left it on the table in my room, but it is not there now, and I thought I might have brought it down-stairs this morning with my letter. No, it is not here,” she continued, as she looked among the books and *bric-à-brac* on the library-table. “ I cannot imagine what has become of it.”

“ Did you ask Mary ? Perhaps she moved it when she arranged your room.”

“ I asked her, but she says she did not touch it. She never disturbs my table. She does not even dust it ; I do that myself.”

“ It may have blown out of the window. There was quite a high wind when I came in.”

“ Yes, that is quite likely. I opened all the windows when I came down. And now I think of it, I did not see it when I went up for my letter.”

“ Was it of any great consequence ?”

“ Oh, no ; I can easily copy it over again.”

A strange fascination, such as is sometimes seen in persons who feel irresistibly impelled to visit the places where their crimes have been committed, or to talk of incidents connected with them, took possession of Julia. Although she knew that the exhibition of any unwonted degree of interest in what, after all, was, so far as Lal was aware, a trivial matter concerning only herself, would be liable to excite suspicion against her, she could not refrain from plying her niece with question after question relative to the matter—the size of the sheet, the kind of paper, the exact position it occupied on the table, whether it was open or folded, and a dozen others of no importance, but the answers to which she knew as well as did Lal. And then there came another, also unnecessary, and which, if there had been any suspicion of her duplicity, might have led, by the agitation she exhibited, to her discovery.

“ What was it about ?” she asked ; “ something very amusing, I suppose.”

“ Oh, no, it was not in the least amusing. Indeed, it was very sad ; but you could not understand it unless you knew all about what took place before. It was a letter written by a lady to a son of Count John Tyscovicus, who was the great ancestor of Mr. Tyscovus.”

Now, although Julia was perfectly conversant with the subject-matter of the letter, she knew nothing whatever of the circumstances under which it had been written. She had never even so much as seen the little

book from which the extract had been made, though, as it was a family matter, she knew the history of it, its general character, and the manner in which it had come into Lal's possession. Here, then, was an opportunity not only for ascertaining the causes that had led to the original letter being written, but also for discovering how Tyscovus's ancestor had acted when he received it. "Surely it might," she thought, "be reasonably supposed that the descendant would act in a similar manner under like circumstances. And what a wonderful fact," she continued to herself, "that three hundred years to a day after the original had been sent to the ancestor a copy should be sent to the descendant!" Julia had heard something of history repeating itself, but she had never heard of such an exact duplication as this, and she really began to feel a sort of pride in her connection with so remarkable an event.

"Now, my dear," she said, settling herself again in the deep arm-chair, "I am not in a hurry this morning, and you can surely give me a few minutes of your time, in which to tell me all about this letter. I have a sort of a presentiment that it is a very interesting story. Sit down there," pointing as she spoke to a low chair near her; "make yourself comfortable, and tell me the whole story of that letter from first to last." Lal smiled at her aunt's eagerness. She glanced at the clock on the mantelpiece; "I can give just ten minutes, Aunt Julia," she said. "It is a very sad story, but it is good for us sometimes to hear such things; and if you would really like to know about the letter, why, I will tell you."

"Yes, I wish to know all about it. I am very cheerful this morning, and though I am not one of those morbid individuals who are never happy unless they are miser-

able, a little sadness to-day would be quite acceptable. So go on, dear."

"Count John Tyseovicius," said Lal, "had a son also named John, and he was about to marry the Countess Louisa Karpinski, when he was arrested and thrown into prison on suspicion of conspiring against the State. He was not guilty of the crime with which he was charged, but he was kept confined in a dungeon and loaded with chains for more than a year before he was let out.

"Just before he was put in jail he parted with the Countess Louisa as he thought only for a few days; but that night he was taken from his bed by soldiers and carried to the prison. The countess sent him word that she would be faithful to him, though he might be kept there all his life, and this thought gave him courage to endure the cruel treatment he received, and to make him long to get out.

"But just as his innocence was about to be shown, and he was already being treated better than he had been, he received a letter from the Countess Louisa which for a while almost made him wish he was dead. That was the letter I copied, and I suppose I will now have to do it all over again."

"How very interesting!" said Julia. "But, my dear, what did she write that was so horrible? Of course she did not give him up in the midst of his sufferings? No true woman would have done that."

"No," exclaimed Lal; "no woman but one whose heart was full of falsehood or whose mind was very weak would have done such a thing, and for a while Count John could not believe that she had written it; but it was in her handwriting, and signed with her name. But shall I read you the letter?" she continued, taking the

little vellum-bound volume from the bosom of her gown. "Then you will see what a wicked letter it was—oh, yes, what a very wicked letter!"

Mrs. Sincote expressed her intense anxiety to hear the letter read. Her interest was excited beyond measure.

" 'NOVEMBER 16, 1574.

" 'DEAR JOHN : It is with a heart full of sorrow,' " Lal read, " 'that I write this letter. How little we know our own souls, even when we think we know them best ! You were my first friend ; the recollection of your goodness to me when I was in sore trouble can never fade from my memory ; I would rather die than cause you pain, and yet I must speak the truth, even though we both suffer more than we have ever suffered in all our lives before. You yourself, even though you may blame me now, will ere long admit that I am right ; for you are a lover of the truth.

" 'I thought I loved you with all my soul ; for when I parted with you, more than two years ago, I felt as though I were leaving behind me all that I valued on earth. But now that I have had time to search my heart, I discover to my dismay that it was not love that filled it, but only a great regard, such as one friend might feel for another. Remember how ignorant I was ; how little I knew of the world, and forgive me any pain that this declaration may cause you.

" 'We may never meet again ; but whether we do or not, be always my friend, as I am yours. L.' "

"And what did he do when he received the letter?" said Julia, leaning forward in her chair, with anxiety depicted on her countenance.

“For a while—it goes on to say here—he sat in his cell without saying a word. He was just like a person in a trance. He was going to be released the very next day, and then he expected to marry the woman who was now so false. Everybody that has ever borne the name of Tyscovus or Tyscovicus, as it was then, has been good and noble,” continued Lal, her face suffused with pride, “and this one was a brave and generous man, who could not do a low act. But he did a foolish one, as the book says.”

“What did he do? I am all anxiety to know.”

“Countess Louisa Karpinski had one aunt, a widow, who was very beautiful but very wicked.”

“Go on!” cried Julia, in a husky voice, as Lal stopped for a moment.

“Yes, she was very wicked, for she was in love with Count John herself, and she wrote him a letter, telling him how false the Countess Louisa was, and how she had endeavored to prevent her writing that letter; and she had all the time been trying to persuade the Countess Louisa to marry another man, the Count Stephen Os-karof.”

Julia had risen to her feet, and was walking the floor with an agitated manner that gave ample evidence of the effect that the story was producing upon her.

“What did he do?” she said, approaching Lal, who was busy turning over the leaves of the book, and who had apparently taken no notice of the excitement displayed by her aunt. “Will you never come to it?”

“In one moment, aunt; I am coming to it. For a long time,” she continued, “he sat without saying a word. Then he read the letter over again. ‘She thought she loved me with all her soul,’ he said. ‘Per-

haps she really did, but her soul is so small that it takes very little love to fill it.' Then he walked the floor of his prison, for his chains had been taken off, and he had been given a large room, and it happened that he glanced into a looking-glass that hung on the wall, and there he saw that his hair and beard, which had been very black, had become as white as snow."

"How horrible!" exclaimed Julia. "How much he must have suffered! But what did he do?"

"The next day he was released from prison, and there at the door, waiting for him in a splendid sleigh, with costly robes to keep him warm, was the treacherous aunt. At first she did not know him, for his hair and beard were entirely white, and his face had a sad look that she had never seen there before. But she took him to her castle, and nursed him till he got well and strong, all the time pitying him on account of the bad way in which he had been treated by the Countess Louisa. And she was so kind, and her sympathy was so sweet to him, that he thought he would marry her; for although he liked her very much he did not yet love her.

"But she began to feel badly about what she had done; she felt that she had committed a great sin, and that she must ask forgiveness of God for her wickedness. And she was very wicked," continued Lal, her own interest deepening as she went on, and her manner becoming more animated, "much worse, Aunt Julia, than you think, and as you will find out directly. So she ordered her sleigh, and went off over the plain, ten miles or more, to a monastery, where there was a good man she knew. She got there, and saw the good man, and told him what she had done—everything. He was very angry, but very sorry, too, and he told her that he could not ask God to

forgive her till she had shown by her works that she repented. Then he commanded her not to go home, but to go to a convent near by, and to stay there and fast and pray for five days, and then to come to him again, and he would help her to undo all the wrong she had done. She left him, promising that she would do all he had ordered. But no sooner was she out of his sight than she changed her mind, and resolved that, no matter what happened, she would marry Count John the next day, as had been arranged. Well, she got into her sleigh and wrapped herself up in her warm robes, and told the driver to go home to her castle as fast as he could. It was night, but the moon was shining so brightly on the snow that it was almost like day. On they went like the wind, and then suddenly she heard a single bark of a wolf, and then in an instant another, and then almost at once a thousand barks from wolves that seemed to spring up from the snow all around them. The driver plunged his horses through those that were in front of him, and lashed them with his whip; and though he was closely followed by the starving wolves, he got back to the castle gate just as his horses fell dead. He turned to help his mistress out of the sleigh, and then he found, to his horror, that she was not there. The wolves had dragged her out and eaten her, and he, in the noise and confusion, did not know it till then. The following day they found her bones and her clothing scattered over the plain."

"Oh, how shocking!" cried Julia, covering her face with her hands, as though to shut out the image of the perfidious aunt being torn to pieces by wolves.

"Yes, it was very shocking; but the worst is to come."

"Worse than that! Did Count John kill himself?"

Lal was a natural-born story-teller. She had carefully kept back the acme for its proper place at the end, and had skilfully concealed certain facts which, but for her method, would have lessened the interest of her listener. But the crisis was now to come.

“Worse and better. Count John did not kill himself, but he had been very weak and foolish to allow himself to be deceived by the aunt, for it was found out that the Countess Louisa had always been faithful, and that she had not written the letter at all, but that it had been forged by her aunt, who was really in love with Count John, and who was wicked enough to do all kinds of dishonorable things to separate him from the Countess Louisa. In a few weeks the Count John Tyscovicius and the Countess Louisa Karpinski were married; but he, though a young man, always remained gray-haired and gray-bearded, and—”

A smothered groan and the sound of something falling heavily caused Lal to turn to where her aunt had stood, but where she stood no longer, for her senseless body lay a motionless mass upon the floor.

CHAPTER X.

A SOCIETY QUESTION.

THE acceptance of the professorship of physiology in the "Martha Washington Medical College for Women," by Mrs. Geoffrey Moultrie, was an event which caused no small amount of commotion in the fashionable and unfashionable worlds of New York and the country at large. The secular press had noticed the fact in terms of high commendation; the medical journals were divided. One portion—that representing the progressive section of the profession—spoke of it approvingly, and predicted that the new professor would still further extend her reputation as a skilful and original investigator, besides advancing the cause of science. The other portion—speaking for the conservative and more numerous division—predicted failure, and declared that physiology was one of those things that no woman could expect to study either with advantage to herself or to scientific medicine. It called attention to the alleged fact that woman was wanting in exactness in her mental processes; that she was prone to jump at conclusions; that she was not capable of weighing evidence and of deciding irrespective of her likes and dislikes; and while it was perhaps possible that certain chairs in a medical college for women might be moderately well filled by her, physiology was the one of all others for which she was utterly unsuited. The *Medical and Surgical Erebus*

was especially severe upon the appointment. This representative of conservatism in medicine was edited by Dr. McPheeters, whose views upon the subject of women-physicians are already known to the reader. This gentleman denounced the appointment in unmeasured terms. He declared that Mrs. Moultrie's previous researches were of no consequence ; that her experiments in evolution were ridiculous ; that the result of her investigations relative to the nerve-force had never been accepted by physiologists as at all worthy of being incorporated into the science of physiology, and that if there must be women-physicians—a necessity that he did not believe existed—the proper teachers were men, who had the ability and the nerve to conduct such experiments as were needed to demonstrate the facts of the science. As for him, he was already of the opinion that no woman could study physiology without experiencing a loss of the delicacy of sentiment which should characterize her. No useful purpose was subserved by teaching a school-girl where her liver was, or that she had such an organ as a spleen, or that there were two hemispheres of the brain, or other anatomical knowledge, the possession of which simply tended to destroy her proper feminine mental characteristics, without giving her any adequate return for the loss. Then he mailed a copy of the *Medical and Surgical Erebus* to Moultrie, and another to his wife, and walked up Fifth Avenue looking more colicky than ever.

But in "social circles" the discussion was still more acrid, and was maintained for a much longer period. Without ever having been in an ultra-fashionable set, whose whole minds are devoted to a continual round of gayety and dissipation, the Moultries had always occupied a position in society among the very best people in

the city of New York. That they did not go to any of the semi-public balls or to many of the private ones was simply because they did not affect that kind of amusement. They went to a few dinner-parties every winter, given by people whom they liked, and at which they were sure of meeting individuals noted for something else besides the possession of city lots and railroad stocks, and they gave half a dozen or so in return, at each of which men or women who had honorably distinguished themselves in science, literature, or art were certain to be found.

Moultrie, although democratic in everything relating to the rights of the people, was very tenacious of his position as a member of the aristocracy of education. He would no more have thought of admitting to his house the Fifth Avenue millionaire who knew nothing but dollars, and who had done nothing but pile up wealth by sharp practices, than he would have held social fellowship with a coal-heaver. Indeed, if the latter could by any possibility have been a refined and educated person, he would not have hesitated a moment in meeting him on socially equal terms. But ignorance and vulgarity were repulsive to him, especially in those who, having acquired wealth, made pretensions to gentility which neither their origin nor their education warranted.

Now, it was chiefly among this latter class that adverse criticisms on Theodora's course abounded. Miss Sorby, for instance, who had been so very hard on Rachel Meadows when she took to making her own living by her brain work, whose grandfather had, as we know, been a truck-driver, and whose grandmother had retailed apples from a stand in the Bowery, did not see how any lady could continue to notice Mrs. Moultrie or touch a

hand that, "for all we know, my dear," as she talked the latter over in her opera-box with her friend Miss Boggs, whose father had been a deck-hand on a ferry-boat, "may not, five minutes before, have dabbled in human gore."

"Yes, or who has just been talking about livers and lights and all them things to a lot of old maids."

"There she is now in her box, with her husband and step-daughter. You'd think, to look at her, that butter wouldn't melt in her mouth; but I guess she's thinking of all them horrid things she's going to talk about to-morrow."

"Well, ma says she'll never ask her to our house again. We called soon after she came to the city, for pa owned some of the railroads that Mr. Moultrie worked on, and we thought we'd be civil to 'em; but she only sent cards in return the next day; and though we asked 'em to our receptions, she never had the decency to come or to invite us to her house."

"How rude! For my part," said Miss Sorby, "I hate vulgarians, and now I guess she'll go down out of notice. Of course she's rich, but mere riches, my dear," tossing her narrow head as she spoke, "don't go for much in our set. *Pas de tout.*"

"Well, I declare!" exclaimed Miss Boggs, whose opera-glass had been levelled at the Moultries' box, "if that isn't disgraceful! There's the French Minister and Prince Bromkouski setting in their box. Pa and my brother, Maximilian von Wied, left cards on them yesterday. I suppose they'll call to-morrow. The prince is awful rich. But I think after this I shall treat them both pretty coldly."

"Oh, the prince is only there," assented Miss Sorby,

“because the step-daughter is half Polish ! Her mother, so they say,” she added, with sharp emphasis, “was a Polish princess, and the girl was lost on the prairie, or something of that sort, when she was a baby, and was only found again about a year ago. For my part, I don’t believe much in them long-lost daughters. Do you, Maria ? No impostures of that sort for me, I thank you ! I don’t think they ought to be tolerated in good society.”

“Oh, as to that !” exclaimed her friend, laughing immoderately, in which Miss Sorby joined, “I’ve known whole families of just such daughters ; but then, you see, they didn’t set in opera-boxes with their so-called step-mothers. Oh, no, not at all !”

“Neither of the gentlemen has spoken a word since they entered the box,” said Miss Boggs, who had continued her observations. “I guess they don’t find their company very entertaining.”

“Oh, these stuck-up people think it isn’t decent to talk at the opera while the singing’s going on. What are a lot of opera-singers, I’d like to know, that we shouldn’t talk before them ? I’ll talk where I please, and laugh, too, if I want to.”

“Not in church you wouldn’t, Selina,” remarked Miss Boggs, in a serious tone of voice, befitting the solemnity of the speech.

“Well, no, of course not in church ; but here I’ll do it as much as I like. The last night I was just talking and laughing with Billy Barlow, not loud, neither, and a man setting in the next box, who came with them Abercrombies, who, I may say, are as much stuck-up as the Moultries, tried to stare me out of countenance ; but the more he stared the more I talked and laughed,

and at last he gave it up as a bad job, and left the box."

"What impudence! I wonder you didn't tell your brother."

"Oh, Maximilian von Wied is so fiery that if I had told him there'd have been a row, sure, and some one would have got hurt. But what do you think the man did? You couldn't guess if you were to try for a week. It was just the rudest thing I ever knew of in my life. He went out and complained to the manager, and he sent an usher to tell us that we must make no noise. And when I said, 'Suppose we talk just as much as we please, what then?' 'Well, miss,' said the fellow, 'if you keep on making a noise I'll have to complain to the policeman in attendance, and I suppose he'll take you out.'"

"How scandalous! I never heard anything quite so bad as that."

"No, my dear, nor I, either. Pa says he's going to give up his box, and that he'll never take it again as long as Stapleton is the manager."

"To go back to the Moultries," said Miss Boggs, dropping her glass and turning away from the stage on which Patti, as Annetta, was singing in the duet in the second act of *Crispino e la Commare*. "They say that Mr. Moultrie is very much opposed to his wife taking a professorship in a medical college. Tommy Pincham told me last night, at the Philanthropists' ball, that Jimmy Sandwich told him that he had it from good authority that Mr. Moultrie became perfectly infuriated when he heard of his wife's intention, and said that he would just as soon have her go on the stage as an actress as to have her teaching and becoming a public character."

"Yes, I heard something like that, only he said he would as soon have his wife ride in a circus as show off in a medical lecture-room. I had it from Johnny Marlin, and you know he lives next door to the Moultries."

"Well, whatever it was, it was bad enough, and it seems to be the general impression that it will end in a divorce. I heard he was divorced from his first wife. I wonder how they ever got into society here!"

"They'll be out now, pretty soon," said Miss Sorby, after a careful study of the Moultrie party through her lorgnette. "By the by, did you ever meet with a rather original character, very intelligent, too—Miss Billy Bremen? She's tolerably wealthy, seventy or eighty thousand a year or thereabouts, daughter of a prominent butcher, who died several years ago, leaving her all his money. She isn't in society at all, but I suppose she will be some of these days, or if she isn't, her children will be."

"What, that little, fat, Dutch thing who keeps the butchers'-shop on Sixth Avenue?"

"She has a large *abattoir* at Locust Point, and a receiving depot in Sixth Avenue, if that's what you call keeping a butcher-shop," answered Miss Sorby, with a little irritation in her voice. "I admit that she's little and fat, but I deny that she's Dutch. She's of *German* descent. Well, she told me that she went to see Mrs. Moultrie on a matter of business, and that she was ordered out of the house and threatened with a policeman by her ladyship before she had uttered a dozen words."

"She must be a perfect termagant."

"Yes; she is even worse than that other woman's-rights woman, Miss Rachel Meadows, whom I had the satisfaction of cutting dead some time ago."

“So had I, and I enjoyed it mightily, I tell you. The idea of her daring to attempt to keep my acquaintance after going about the country lecturing.”

Just then the curtain fell, and the two young ladies, relapsing into silence, occupied themselves in scanning with their opera-glasses the parties in the various boxes and the gentlemen who stood in the aisles.

But in a higher class, though by no means a more fashionable one, Theodora's step was considered from a different standpoint from that in which it was regarded by the Misses Sorby and Boggs and their set. Here she had many warm friends, who took an interest in what concerned her, and who liked her for her good sense and for the pleasure they derived from her society. By most of them her new departure was regarded with regret, for they had notions in relation to woman's sphere which were altogether incompatible with such an act as hers appeared to them to be. They thought it was a lowering of the high standard of femininity that they had erected, and that they conceived a woman of her excellence and prominence should endeavor to maintain, for her to assume a position that required her to act a part that, so far as their knowledge extended, had heretofore been assigned exclusively to men. They believed that no woman, especially a married woman, and, above all, one who had everything about her to make her life honorable and happy, should seek outside of her own home for a field upon which to display her knowledge or to make herself useful, unless it were one of charity or benevolence. They did not question her ability, or the honesty of purpose by which she was actuated, but they did doubt her possession of that equable temperament which, up to this time, they had given her credit for

having. There was no intention among these people of dropping her acquaintance ; they did not look upon her proposed act as one that was incompatible with her position as a lady, but they were sincerely grieved that she should have felt called upon to make such a tremendous innovation in the manners and customs of women of gentle breeding. It might all be very well for women-graduates in medicine, who had sat on the benches with men-students in the University of Zurich or of that of Paris, to give lectures in a medical college. Delicacy and refinement were not to be expected in them. Like the grapes that are handled, the bloom had been rubbed off, and it would not be any greater desecration of their womanly natures for them to recapitulate as professors what they had learned as pupils. These people, sensible as they in general were, seemed to be incapable of grasping the idea by which Theodora was animated. They had travelled so long in one rut that it had become impossible for them to extricate themselves and to move once more over unworn ground.

And they were disposed to hold Moultrie responsible for the departure from the system of social observances that Theodora contemplated. They held to the old-fashioned idea that the wife should be completely under her husband's influence, at least so far as concerned her relations with the world outside of her own domicile. St. Paul had declared that the husband was the head of the wife, even as Christ was the head of the Church. Nothing, they thought, could be stronger than this assertion of Scripture ; and when Mrs. Castor, whose cousin was a bishop, quoted and applied it with great unction one day, in conversation with that irreverent old lady, Mrs. Pollux, whose father had been a blockade-runner,

or a slave-trader, or a pirate, or something else of the kind, and was told in reply, "Very true, my dear; but if Christ is to be held responsible for everything the Church has done, I am afraid he will require the grace of God as much as we poor sinners," she was shocked at the *quasi* blasphemy, but her opinion was not in the least shaken.

Both ladies were at the opera that evening, in their respective boxes, and Moultrie, who knew them very intimately, visited them in turn during the next *entr'act*. First he entered Mrs. Castor's box. The lady did not care for music; it was a bore to her; but she went to the opera because it was the proper thing to do, and because Mr. Castor was infatuated with it; but whether with the music, or the lady singers, or the *coryphées*, she could never exactly determine. She knew, however, that he did not, when his daughter was performing on the piano, know one tune from another, and yet at the opera he clapped his hands and cried "*brava!*" and whispered "beautiful!" as some intricate piece of musical pyrotechnics was let off, or some complicated Terpsichorean performance evolved out of the nether limbs of the members of the *corps de ballet*. It was a little suspicious, especially the latter circumstance, but he had always declared that it was not the dancing that enraptured him, but the admirable work of the orchestra. Nevertheless Mrs. Castor thought that it was just possible he needed watching; so she had an additional inducement for attending the opera.

She greeted Moultrie very warmly, and made room for him by relegating young Castor from the chair he was occupying next to her to one at the back of the box, where he was out of the way. "Sit here," she

said ; “ I am so glad to see you. We—that is, Mr. Castor and I, were just saying how well Mrs. Moultrie is looking to-night, and how lovely your daughter is. Is she to be brought out this season ? ”

“ No ; Mrs. Moultrie and I both think that she had better not have her mind diverted yet awhile from more serious subjects, and she is of our opinion. Next year will be time enough.”

“ Well, don’t delay it too long. Girls, as Mr. Castor says, are like city lots. You keep them, expecting that business will reach them soon, and that then you will sell, when suddenly you discover that trade has taken all at once a tremendous jump, and has skipped them.”

Moultrie smiled at this characteristic illustration, for the Castors owed much of their prominence, socially and financially, to the large number of “ lots ” owned by the head of the house.

“ I am not afraid of that for Lalage,” he said. “ As you are an old friend, I may be excused for telling you that her fate is sealed.”

“ What, engaged to be married, and not yet out in society ! ”

“ Yes ; she was engaged before she left Colorado.”

“ Will it be considered impertinent if I inquire who is the happy man ? ”

“ Not at all. She will in a few months marry the Count John Tyscovus of Poland, or, as he is now, the Hon. John Tyscovus, Delegate to Congress from the Territory of Colorado.”

“ Tyscovus ! Oh, yes, I know him ! He has been, off and on, a good deal in New York society. His father married an American woman, one of the Pinkneys, and he has a large fortune, made up from both sides. To

think of his turning up in Colorado as a Member of Congress, and about to marry your daughter !”

“ Yes, it is all very remarkable. But how do you like the opera this evening ?”

“ You know I don’t care much for music, but I suppose it is all very fine, if one may judge by the applause. Besides, my whole mind is full of another matter. Will you allow me, as an old friend,” she continued, laying her hand on his arm, “ to talk with you a little about it ?”

“ My dear Mrs. Castor, you may talk to me about any subject you please. Your right as a friend is indisputable.” He knew very well what was coming, and was rather glad than otherwise of the opportunity to set his friends right in regard to several points in which they were clearly wrong.

“ Thanks. You will not misunderstand my motives, I am sure.” She stopped for a moment, as though thinking—as she probably was—how to begin. Then she said :

“ You are blessed with a lovely woman for a wife—one who wins the hearts of all who know her. You have given her all that is calculated to make her life happy—good position, wealth, a refined home, and everything that riches and taste and love can afford. Besides, and above all else, you are a home-man, with home-interests apparently above all other interests—that is, you do not spend your days and nights at your club, and your amusements are found with your family. Well, now I hear that your wife is going into public life as a lecturer in a medical college for women. My dear friend, you will not be surprised if I ask why is this, for it is a question that is on the lips of everybody who knows you or her.”

“ It is not likely, my dear Mrs. Castor, that you could

offend me by showing that you take an interest in me and mine, especially when you accompany your question with so many kind expressions. And I should ill repay your goodness were I to refuse to answer. You did not know my wife before her marriage, and hence much of what I am about to say may perhaps be a surprise to you. My wife," he continued, after receiving an encouraging glance from Mrs. Castor—and they were now alone in the box—"was educated in a peculiar way—entirely, in fact, by her father and a Swiss governess, who was a graduate in medicine of the University of Zurich. While Theodora was yet a child her mother died, and her father became imbued with certain notions relative to women and their proper position in the social and the political worlds, that exercised a preponderating influence over him in the matter of the education of his daughter. He had her taught medicine and natural science, especially anatomy and physiology, and tried to instil in her a desire to enter politics. Here, however, law was against him ; but she frequently gave lectures to the people of the town in which they lived, in a lyceum which he had instituted and liberally endowed.

"It was not, therefore, surprising that under such influences her mind should have been developed in a particular direction, and that she should have acquired a great fondness for the sciences she studied. Her intellect was good ; few men have more equally-balanced minds than has she, and she possesses also that greatest of all the mental faculties, the power of concentrating her attention upon a subject and of keeping it there till she has understood it thoroughly. She had ample opportunity for several years, under the encouragement of her father and teacher, to study and investigate to her heart's

content. A laboratory admirably fitted up was built, and here she not only devoted herself to the acquirement of existing knowledge, but she made original experiments that have materially added, as all physiologists admit, to the sum total of established facts in that science.

“During five or six years this course of instruction and study were kept up. She became more than ordinarily proficient in medicine; and though she never attended lectures at a medical college, and hence never took the degree of Doctor of Medicine, she practised quite extensively among the women and children of the part of the country where she lived. Physicians have told me that her knowledge was far above that of the average doctor, and that, moreover, she possessed a degree of tact and of judgment that would have done credit to men in the profession of twice her age and experience.

“I suppose it is hardly possible for you, my dear Mrs. Castor, to imagine that a young girl of good family, and reared amid all the luxuries and refinements that large wealth can give, could take an interest in such subjects, or that, taking it, could preserve her natural sweetness of character, and, above all, that she should develop into a pure-minded, gentle woman, whose tastes for the beautiful in nature and art should be as well marked as though she had been brought up, for instance, under your care. It would be difficult, I say, for you to consider the possibility of such a thing, for to do so requires a kind of experience that you have never had. You might as well be called upon to give your views of the characteristics of the inhabitants of the moon, if there are any.

“And I am free to confess that when I first met

Theodora Willis my prejudices were not essentially different from those that now actuate you. I saw that she was beautiful ; I felt instinctively, as I watched her movements and heard her speak, that she was refined, modest, and free from those disagreeable peculiarities of temper or disposition that so many young women of the present day exhibit. And yet when I learned, as I did the next day, in casual conversation with her father, that she had studied medicine and had dissected ‘all kinds of animals, from man to insects,’ I was shocked beyond measure, and I determined that I would never meet her again. But already her spell was around me. I *did* meet her again, and many times ; and, little by little, my prejudices faded away before the light of indubitable facts, and then I knew that there was nothing good or pure or noble in womanhood that was not in Theodora Willis. I recognized then the grand truth that there is nothing in the study of the works of God, when undertaken with pure motives, that can tend to debase the mind, either of man or of woman ; but that, on the contrary, it is lifted above the meannesses and trivialities of life to a plane of which those who grovel in ignorance have no conception.”

“ Verily,” exclaimed Mrs. Castor, “ ‘ thou almost persuadest me.’ Your reasoning is good, and the truth of all that you say of your wife is unquestionable. Doubtless Mr. Castor would say as much for me if it should ever become necessary, but up to this time I have never distinguished myself, except, perhaps, for my dinner-parties. An eminence in that direction requires no defence. Now, my friend, go on.”

“ After our marriage,” continued Moultrie, “ my wife gave up her special studies, or at least the practical part

of them, though she has always continued to take an interest in all departments of natural science. I have done nothing to discourage her, for I knew very well that a mind as active and as intelligent as hers could not remain content with the mere satisfaction of its emotional part. I felt afraid, too, that the love for original investigations and for a more thorough identification with scientific pursuits was only dormant, and I have been expecting, ever since I made her my wife, that the time would come when the longing would rise to the surface. Well, it came when she was offered the professorship of physiology in the 'Martha Washington Medical College for Women.' I saw that she was pleased, but I also saw that she was resolved to allow me to decide for her. One word from me would have stopped the whole thing. Can you blame me, when the chief object of my life is to secure her happiness, that I refused to interfere, but that, on the contrary, I gave my full and unreserved approval of the acceptance?"

"No, my friend, so far as your relations with your wife are concerned I do not blame you; but people who live in the world are obliged to sacrifice something to expediency. They cannot, in fact, afford to disregard the prejudices of those among whom they live. For instance, there would be nothing intrinsically wrong in my walking down Fifth Avenue every morning at ten o'clock in a bathing-dress; but don't you suppose that if I were to do so I would become the subject of censure or ridicule; that I would attract a crowd of hooting men and boys, and that, probably, although I had violated none of the canons of decency, I should be arrested by the police?"

"And I think," said Moultrie, laughing, "that if you

did such a thing from pure wantonness, or simply for your amusement, or for the sake of making yourself notorious, that you ought to be arrested. You have chosen an extreme case, but I will accept it. Now, suppose that by walking down Fifth Avenue every day at ten o'clock, clothed in a bathing-dress, you improved your mind and showed other women how they could improve theirs; and suppose, further, that instead of being a ridiculous and irrational performance, the act were one necessary to the understanding of the noblest works of God—those comprised within the domain of organic nature, from man down to the lowest vegetable forms—would it not be your duty to incur the derision of the ignorant or the odium and contempt of the malicious for the sake of the objects you had in view? Remember the fate of all reformers. They are in advance of their time. In the Middle Ages we burnt them at a stake; now we visit them with social ostracism. My wife can endure it, and with God's help I intend that she shall not falter for want of a supporting hand from me. And as to society, composed as it is in New York of elements two thirds of which are beneath the contempt of educated and intelligent people, neither I nor my wife will allow its action one way or the other to disturb our equanimity."

Mrs. Castor was silent for a few moments. She was evidently much moved by what Moultrie had said and by his manner of saying it. Had he observed her closely, he would have seen a tear in each eye and a little nervous twitching about the corners of the mouth, which, try as she would, she could not prevent. His hand, the one nearer Mrs. Castor, rested on his knee, and presently he felt her touch it.

“When does your wife begin her lectures?” she said, with a little tremor of her voice.

“To-morrow at three o’clock. I shall go with her to the college and stay with her while she is delivering it. Being her introductory, it will not be strictly of a scientific character. At least, not deeply so.”

“May I go with you?” As she said these words Moultrie felt her hand press his with a little more force.

He did not speak, but his hand turned and grasped hers, and he gave her a look, which was all the answer she needed.

“Then if you will allow me,” she continued, withdrawing her hand and recovering her composure, “I will take lunch with you at two o’clock, and you shall drive me over with you to the college. My friend,” she continued, “you are right. Your wife is a heroine, you are a hero, and, please God, we will fight this matter through. Now go; there’s old Mrs. Pollux looking at us through her glass and grinning, and if you stay here much longer she will circulate a story that you have been making love to me, whereas it is I who have been making love to you.”

There was nothing patronizing in Mrs. Castor’s words or manner. She was not the woman to attempt that line with a man like Moultrie; neither was he a person to submit to it from anybody. He felt that she had been honestly converted from her way of thinking, and that she intended to “assist” at Theodora’s introductory, not so much for the purpose of giving countenance to her as to show the world that she had undergone a change of views. She was a very independent woman. She could do pretty much as she pleased in New York, and be certain of having any number of servile imitators. Once let it be known that Mrs. Castor had attended Mrs.

Moultrie's introductory lecture on physiology, and the opinions of a hundred women which now hung in the balance or were dead against women-lecturers would be firmly settled in their favor.

Mrs. Pollux smiled graciously as Moultrie entered her box, and holding out her hand, gave him a vacant seat on one side of her. The chair on the other side was occupied by General Bluffum, on the retired list of the army, who had attained high military rank by pursuing the discreet policy of never differing with his superiors, and by staying around Washington, on bureau or staff duty, thus keeping the "powers that were" constantly aware of his existence—a fact which, as he had never been under fire, and probably never in front of an enemy in the field, might otherwise have passed out of their memory. The two gentlemen bowed to each other, and Moultrie having taken the seat indicated to him, Mrs. Pollux opened her batteries.

She was Mrs. Castor's best and most intimate friend, though the two ladies never met without having a dispute, in which, owing to her utter indifference and recklessness as to what she said, Mrs. Pollux, so far as words went, generally had the better of it. She was older than Mrs. Castor by at least ten years, having been fifty-one at her last birthday; but though she never denied her own age, she insisted with the utmost vehemence that "Tilly Castor might say what she pleased, but if she ever saw fifty-two again it would have to be when her soul was transmigrated into another animal younger than the one that now held it."

"I'm coming to your wife's lecture to-morrow!" she exclaimed, almost before Moultrie had fairly got settled into his chair. "Indeed, I think I shall attend the

whole course ; I've always had a curiosity to know why people who never think should have brains. It seems to me such a waste. I've been asking General Bluffum, but he couldn't tell me. By the by, that reminds me that as often as I've asked General Bluffum for information I've never succeeded in getting any."

"If you would ask me about Egypt now," said the General, "I could tell you a good deal about it. Spent last winter there," he continued, addressing Moultrie. "Brought home lots of embroideries, brass-ware, mummies, and other antiquities. In fact, I quite spoiled the Egyptians. Ha ! ha !"

"Spoiled the Egyptians, did you ?" said Mrs. Pollux, a little sharply, for she had no idea of allowing the General to join in the conversation she wanted to have with Moultrie. "Well, they're not the only things you've spoiled in your time. You're fit for treasons, stratagems, and spoils. Had him that time," she continued, in a whisper to Moultrie.

"That's because I have no music in my soul," replied the General, good-naturedly.

"Now, whenever I hear General Bluffum talking about his soul," growled Mrs. Pollux to Moultrie, "I wish I had your wife's microscope handy, so that I could take a peep at it. Now, tell me all about this new move of your wife's. You needn't mind Bluffum. He knows that it would be as much as his life's worth for him to repeat anything he hears in this box."

"There is nothing to tell," said Moultrie, smiling, "except that to-morrow afternoon at three o'clock Mrs. Geoffrey Moultrie will give her first lecture on physiology."

"And do you approve of her doing so ?" said Mrs. Pollux, looking him straight in the face.

“Of course I do. In the first place, I approve of everything she does ; and in the second place, she does nothing that I do not approve of.”

“Spoken like a man and a brother !” exclaimed Mrs. Pollux. “Give us your hand ! I must shake it after that. You’ll hold your own in spite of ’em. They’re a bad lot, these New York ‘society women,’ as they call themselves—most of ’em are, I mean ; up to-day and down to-morrow. Giving a ball at Delmonico’s this week, and living on a flat in Long Island City the next. And for the ‘loiks o’ thim,’ as my coachman says, to be conspiring against you and me is a little too much—you whose grandfather was a general in the Revolution, and me whose father commanded the Bolivian navy ! What time do you go ? Why can’t you both come over and lunch with me, and then we’ll go together.”

“Mainly, I suppose, because Mrs. Castor is coming to lunch with us.”

“Then ask your wife to send me an invitation to join you, and I’ll come too, and we’ll all go together. But you don’t mean to tell me that Tilly Castor is going to give you the light of *her* countenance !”

“Mrs. Castor certainly expects to be present.”

“The inconsistent old thing ! But there goes the curtain, and we mustn’t talk any more. There are a couple of young blackguards—that Sorby girl and that Boggs ditto—in the next box, and they’ve done nothing but talk about you all the evening. They kept it up all the time the singing was going on, and I heard them bragging how they had stared a gentleman out of countenance who tried to make them stop by looking at them. I stopped them, but not by looking at them. I took this,” showing a sharp gold pin, some four inches

long, and with a head made of a single large diamond, "out of my lace, and when the Sorby girl was talking her loudest I very stealthily stuck it about an inch into the small of her back. Lord! I wish you could have seen her jump. She knows I did it, but she can't prove it, and she knows what I did it for. She hasn't opened her mouth since. Good-night. Don't forget to ask your wife to invite me to lunch, and we'll show 'em who's who in New York.'"

CHAPTER XI.

A BEGINNING AND AN END.

THEODORA had made several visits to the "Martha Washington Medical College for Women," and had become familiar with the arrangements which the founders of that institution had established for the furtherance of the objects they had in view. The building had been erected, at considerable cost, for the special purpose of a medical college, and was far better supplied with the requirements of such a structure than are most of those used for the like object by the opposite sex. She had thus often been brought into intimate association with Rachel Meadows, and had also made the acquaintance of Miss Richardson, who, though not a graduate in medicine, or even a systematic student of the science, had attended several of the courses of lectures, in order, as she said, to make herself acquainted with those branches of knowledge which, as she declared, every educated person, man or woman, ought to know something about. She had announced her intention of attending all the lectures to be delivered by Mrs. Moultrie.

In order to show their appreciation of Theodora's acquirements, and probably also for the purpose of providing for uniformity in the titles held by the several members of the Faculty, the trustees had conferred upon her the honorary degree of "Doctor of Medicine." She smiled when she was called "Doctor" for the first

time, and she soon discovered that she was to receive that handle to her name whenever she was addressed by any one, officer or student, connected with the college.

The class in attendance was a large one, and was made up not only from all parts of the United States, but from other countries of America, North and South, as well as of a sprinkling from Europe. Most of them were women who had passed the heyday of their youth, but there were several who were not yet out of their teens, and a few—though not many, it must be confessed—who were possessed of great personal beauty.

The morning of the 20th of November, 1874, opened auspiciously. The day was clear, cool, and crisp, and Theodora was in such a condition of *bien aise* as to admit of the same adjectives being applied to her. She had worked hard at the preparation of her lecture, but at the same time so systematically that she felt no fatigue. She had one of those minds in which subjects are, as it were—to use the simile of an eminent scholar—laid away on shelves or hung up on pegs, ready for service when needed. It was not much trouble for her to get them down and to bring them into use when required. Then when she had gotten them all arranged in the order she intended she went to the opera, as we have seen, and for the first time in her life Lal went with her.

But although she was ready, and felt that confidence in herself which the person who has mastered what he or she is about to discuss always feels, and although she had no doubt in regard to her ability to communicate her knowledge to others, she did not underrate the importance of the step she was about to take. She felt, indeed, as though upon her had fallen the task of showing to the world that it was not requisite that a woman who de-

sired to live an active scientific life should cut herself off from those associations which, in all ages of the world, had been regarded as hers by right of custom and nature. So far as she knew, no woman situated as she was had ever occupied a chair in a medical college. There had been women-professors—in fact, there were three in the college with which she was connected, the others being men—but they were all either single women well advanced in years, who had given up all ideas of marriage, or widows without any immediate family ties. However, there was no denying the fact that none of them was, either by manners or education, such a person as she would have chosen as her social companion or acquaintance. All of them were disorderly in their dress and had certain offensive habits that would have ruled them out of good society.

Thus, Dr. Susan Pike, who held a prominent chair in the school, and who, so far as her medical knowledge went, was probably competent to teach the branch assigned to her, indulged in the use of “chewing gum” to such an extent that not only were her jaws kept in perpetual motion, even when she was not talking, but the secretions of the salivary glands were so materially augmented above all normal standards, that she was obliged to spit every two or three minutes. On account of this habit she was known among the lady-students as the “Llama,” and a bright girl in the class had drawn a caricature of her as one of these useful, though disagreeable, animals, standing in the amphitheatre and giving a lecture, with a big spittoon hung around her neck.

Another, Dr. Marie Antoinette Billings, an elderly lady, who had buried two husbands, and had then taken up the study of medicine, had had several severe contests

with medical societies in the effort to obtain recognition from the male members of the profession. There was nothing at all singular in Dr. Billings's assumption of the doctorate beyond the fact that she was a woman. Nevertheless, in her own city, Philadelphia, she had been refused admission into the county medical society on no other ground than that of her sex. Whereupon she had shaken the dust of the Quaker City from her feet and had removed to New York, where, notwithstanding the factious opposition of Dr. McPheeters and his "gang," as she called them, she had been admitted to full fellowship. Although nearly fifty years of age when she began the study of medicine, she had acquired a sound knowledge of its principles, and her experience, especially in the department of children's diseases, was very considerable. Her success had been somewhat remarkable, for her personal characteristics, to those of delicate sensibilities, were not pleasant. She was nicknamed "Saint Eufraxia," who, as the legend states, was a holy woman belonging to a convent of one hundred and thirty nuns, not one of whom ever washed her feet. The very mention of a bath was an abomination to these good ladies. Whether or not Dr. Marie Antoinette Billings carried matters as far as did Saint Eufraxia and her companions, it was very evident that she possessed the "odor of sanctity" to such a degree as to make her room better than her company.

Then there was Dr. Libby Johnson, a lady who had passed the meridian of her life in single blessedness, who was very angular in her movements and postures, very untidy in her person, very precise in her speech, and very ignorant of the first glimmering of the idea of the subject—*Materia Medica* and *Therapeutics*—which

she had undertaken to teach to the suckling feminine Galens at the "Martha Washington Medical College for Women."

How Dr. Libby Johnson had succeeded in getting a diploma was never known. That she had one, and from a respectable college, was undoubted, for the governing powers of the school were exceedingly strict in their ideas of regularity, and "out-Heroded Herod" in their adherence to the code of ethics of the American Medical Association, just as the Canadians, who are left out in the cold, are more loyal to the throne than the English themselves.

But it was very certain that she was not qualified to fill the chair that she held. She managed, however, to recapitulate *verbatim* the views of writers who knew what they were writing about. All her lectures were written out in full, and had been copied from authorities whose teachings might safely be followed.

She had obtained her appointment through the personal influence of a wealthy lady, who had given ten thousand dollars for the endowment of the chair, on condition that Dr. Libby Johnson should be the first occupant. Now the trustees were beginning to take legal advice as to their power to remove Dr. Libby without forfeiting their endowment, with a strong prospect of a favorable opinion on the point.

Her peculiarity was an infirmity rather than a fault, but it was one, nevertheless, that caused her to live a life of comparative isolation, both on her own account and that of others. She was afflicted with a species of St. Vitus's dance of the muscles of the face, so that she was either winking or grinning or exhibiting some other expressional manifestation all the time that she was in

company, unless she preserved a state of silence and of indifference in regard to what was being said or done in her presence. The very moment that she opened her mouth to speak, that instant her eyelids, the corners of her mouth, and her nose began to work. She had even been known, when under more than usual excitement, to "wag her left ear;" but ordinarily the twitchings did not extend so far as that organ. It was very provoking, however, to her and others, that when some particularly serious remark had been addressed to her she should, before answering, elevate her brows and wink her eyes, as though expressing surprise and doubt. Indeed, the affliction would, but for her years, have excited the censorious remarks of the ignorant and the malicious. As it was, when a young gentleman had picked up her fan which she had dropped, and was repaid by a kind glance and a wink of her right eye, old Miss Scribner, who saw the whole thing, was loud in her denunciation of a woman "old enough to be his grandmother."

Such were the women members of the Faculty. As to the men, the less said of them the better. They were commonplace in every way. But then, so little ability and knowledge are absolutely requisite in a professor in a medical college, that they got along quite as well as many of their brethren in more pretentious institutions.

It was one o'clock; Mrs. Castor and Mrs. Pollux had arrived in time for lunch, and Moultrie had come up from his office to join them. Both ladies were profuse in their compliments on Theodora's good looks and the courage she was showing. She had spent the morning in thinking over her subject and in familiarizing herself with her thoughts, so as to get them into good working order, to have them, as it were, at her tongue's end, ready

for use the instant she wished to enunciate them. She had not written a word of her lecture, nor did she even intend to use notes in its delivery. She had studied it thoroughly ; she was satisfied that she had done her best, and whether it fell dead or took the public by storm were alternatives that were now beyond her control.

“ Are we not to have your lovely daughter with us, Mr. Moultrie ? ” said Mrs. Castor, as she took his arm and went in with him to lunch.

“ No ; I was just asking Mrs. Moultrie about her. She is very busy, and begs to be excused. ”

“ What a model scholar ! Does she allow herself no relaxation from her labors ? ”

“ Yes ; but it would be no relaxation for her to be here, and especially for her to listen to her mother’s lecture. This evening we shall all talk it over. ”

“ Do you know that there will be an immense audience ? All the most prominent scientific and literary people in the city will be there, and any number of persons who, like Mrs. Pollux and myself, know nothing, but who go because we are anxious to see how a woman conducts herself when she comes to deal with a serious subject like physiology, and one, too, that requires such intense application. ”

“ I have no fear for her, ” said Moultrie, glancing toward his wife, his face expressing the pride he took in her. “ A woman with her knowledge need never be afraid to stand up before the most learned assembly in the land and tell what she knows. She has had a training which, if I had had one half so good, would have been greatly to my advantage. ”

“ Oh, how I admire your confidence in her ! If men were all as generous and as true as you are, how differ-

ent we women would be ! I have seen many women—singers, actresses, ballet-dancers—make their *débuts* before crowded assemblies, and face the ordeal with courage and success, and I have witnessed some break down and retire in confusion and tears ; but the strain in such cases was not so severe as that that your wife will experience to-day.”

“ She will endure it, for she has the blood and the breeding and the *esprit* of a family the members of which, men or women, have never quailed in the face of dangers or failed in the face of difficulties.”

“ What are you two talking about so mysteriously ?” said Mrs. Pollux, who sat on the other side of Moultrie. “ Where there are only four together at table conversation should be general. Now, let me tell you what I’ve done. I went out this morning and got all—*all*, I say—the works of Herbert Huxley and Tyndall Spencer, and I’ve been through them. The consequence is, that I wish I was dead. If I had known that an intelligent person, such as I think I may, without undue vanity, say I am, would have been expected to read those books, I would never have been willing to be born. Is your lecture to be about such things as cataplasm, or whatever you call it, and the Lord knows what else besides ?”

“ Darwin, and Huxley, and Tyndall, and Spencer are our masters,” answered Theodora, smiling. “ Take some of that *paté*. I know you like English pheasants, and when I heard you were going to be kind enough to lunch with us I ordered the dish for your special benefit.”

“ Yes, and I find I am being plied with wine, too, doubtless for the purpose of putting me into such a condition as will prevent me understanding your lecture.

But you may spare your Chablis and your Lafitte and your Pommery sec, so far as Mrs. Castor and I are concerned. My mind—and hers, too, although she will swear she knows all you are going to speak about—is as blank as a sheet of paper, and all the wine in France couldn't make it blanker."

"Speak for yourself, Carry, please," said Mrs. Castor. "It would, we know, be almost impious for any one to attempt to make an impression on *your* mind. It would look like endeavoring to contravene the eternal decrees of the Almighty. As for me, I happen to be familiar with the teachings of the great men whose very names you have confused, and I feel myself capable of understanding Mrs. Moultrie's lecture."

Never had Mrs. Pollux been answered by her friend with so much spirit as now. For a moment she regarded her with an expression of utter astonishment on her face. Then she burst out :

"Hoighty-toighty !" she exclaimed. "The worm has actually turned ! But no, no," with a melancholy shake of her head and a ludicrous dropping of the corners of her mouth, as though she were about to burst into tears ; "I see how it is : 'Much learning has made thee mad.' Well, well, as the Member of Congress from the Puddlefield district remarked the other day in debate, 'Ef I hadn't 'a' seed it I wouldn't 'a' knowed it.' "

"I shall not notice her further," said Mrs. Castor, *sotto voce*, to Theodora. "She's a vulgar old woman, and a thorough fraud."

Nevertheless, when they left the table to enter Mrs. Moultrie's landau—they had sent away their own carriages—they were "Tilly-ing" and "Carry-ing" each

other as though there had never been a cross word between them.

When they arrived at the college they saw, from the long string of carriages waiting on either side of the street, that already a large audience was in attendance. Moultrie and his wife ascended the steps and entered the building. Mrs. Castor and Mrs. Pollux lingered behind to scrutinize the carriages and the liveries, in the effort to discover who were present. It did not take them long, and they hurried to overtake the others, who were waiting for them in the vestibule. "My dear," whispered Mrs. Pollux in Theodora's ear, "everybody is here—everybody! I never saw the like of it before. You'll not only have wealth, but you'll have science and art, literature and politics, to listen to you. Oh, you dear, I could just hug you to death for joy!"

"Wait till my lecture is over," said Theodora, smiling. "Perhaps then you will want to do it to revenge yourself."

Then an usher came and conducted them into a room, from which a passage-way led to the rostrum, and which had been specially reserved for Theodora and her party. A noisy orchestra was performing a selection of operatic airs, for the lecture was not only the introductory to Theodora's course on physiology, but was the opening one of the session, and, as was usual on such occasions, the trustees had lugged in music to add to the attractions of the event—a custom, perhaps, better honored in the breach than in the observance.

There were yet about five minutes before the hour for beginning. Theodora wished that she could be alone with her husband, for her two garrulous friends kept up a running fire of comments on the audience, which they

were surveying through a convenient peep-hole, and disturbed her thoughts. It can scarcely be said that she was not interested in knowing who were to hear her ; but certainly her two friends exceeded her in this respect. Each new accession of some distinguished man or woman was noted by them, and was the subject of delighted comment. It was quite evident, both to Moultrie and his wife, that the ladies were greatly relieved in mind by finding that they were not the only "leaders of society" to give their countenance to this new departure of one of their number, and equally so, now that they saw what a splendid indorsement the lecturer would probably receive, that they were anxious not only to keep in the advance, but to assume the directorship.

"As I live!" exclaimed Mrs. Pollux, whose eye was at the peep-hole, "if there isn't Mr. Carp. He must have come all the way from Washington on purpose. Yes, and there are Mr. Hurse, and Mr. Bolster, and General Marquand, and Bishop Crocker ; to think *he* should come out to hear you ! My dear, that *is* an honor—at least, in Tilly Castor's eyes. Her cousin was a bishop, you know. As to doctors, there's no end of them ; and lawyers ! their name is legion."

"If you have quite surveyed the audience," said Mrs. Castor, with a little asperity, "perhaps you will kindly allow me to take one glance before we go on the stage."

"Certainly, my dear," replied Mrs. Pollux, giving up her place, "only it is a platform that we are going on. I'm not yet quite ready to go on the stage. As to you, my love, you've been such an actress all your life, that you have been flattering yourself that at last you were about to appear in public. But it's not a theatre, dear. It's only a medical college."

Mrs. Castor took possession of the peep-hole without deigning a reply to this ill-natured speech of her friend's. She looked searchingly around the room for about a minute. Then she went over to where 'Theodora was standing, and said to her :

“ My dear child, such an assemblage was never seen in this city before ! Everybody who is anybody is here. Even Mrs. Stanhope, who never goes anywhere unless she is certain to get the worth of her trouble, is here in all her glory. And then there are Mrs. Vander Dunke—it ought to be D-o-n-k-e-y—and her two daughters ; Mrs. Delancey Darby ; the French minister and Madame de Faux ; your friend Prince Bromkouski, and that odious Miss Gildersleeve, dressed like a man, as far as she dare go, and looking like one, too. She's got her notebook out, and she'll serve you up to-morrow in the *Tattler*, no matter what sort of a lecture you give.”

Just then an usher appeared, and stated that the trustees and faculty were now ready to enter the lecture-room. Our party went out into the passage-way, and were there met by the head of the procession. A lady whom Theodora knew very well, Mrs. Gilbert Mowbray, the President of the Board, approached and offered her her arm. From somewhere or other Mr. Castor appeared and gave his to Mrs. Pollux, while Moultrie escorted Mrs. Castor. The strains of the orchestra were now heard in the form of the wedding-march from *Lohengrin*, the doors were thrown wide open, and in an instant Theodora found herself facing a thousand people. A round of applause greeted the procession, as Mrs. Mowbray and Theodora appeared, which was continued till the whole party had taken their seats in the prescribed order on the platform. Then the music ceased,

the Rev. Paul Stuart Hardcastle made a short prayer, and then Mrs. Mowbray, as President of the college, read an address, setting forth its struggles, its triumphs, and its objects.

While the reading was going on Theodora took the opportunity of looking around her. She saw many faces of persons she knew, all wearing a kindly expression. Among them was that of the Hon. Tom Burton, of whose admiration for Rachel Meadows, Moultrie had told her. He had probably come there as much for the purpose of seeing again the woman who had so strongly impressed him as to hear her lecture. Her eyes roved around the sea of upturned faces. Yes, there was one that was not friendly, for far off in a corner was Miss Billy Bremen, the diamonds in her ears being her most conspicuous feature, though the scowl on her broad face was as marked as her features permitted her to make it.

And every eye was turned on Theodora. Never had she looked more beautiful than she did then. Her color was perhaps slightly heightened by the excitement of the occasion, and her eyes were a little brighter; but these changes added to rather than detracted from her appearance. Her admirable composure, the gentleness yet dignity of her bearing, were the subjects of general admiration; and when, after a few words of introduction, Mrs. Mowbray approached and offered her hand to lead her to the desk behind which the speaker was expected to stand, and Theodora rose to her feet, a murmur of admiration, and then a tremendous round of applause, in which Burton was seen as a leader, burst forth from the large assemblage.

Theodora had removed her cloak and gloves, but she wore her bonnet. Her gown was of dark blue velvet,

one that had been sent over by Worth only a few days before, and which she was now wearing for the first time. At her corsage was a bouquet of her favorite Jacqueminot roses that her husband had gathered for her. For a single instant she stood facing the crowd. Then she turned and bowed to the president, then to the audience, and then, while every one wondered what she was about to do, she walked across the platform to where her husband was sitting. He rose from his chair and advanced toward her, thinking that something had happened; but she stopped when about five feet from him, and made him a graceful obeisance. In an instant a deafening shout arose from the crowd, always in New York prompt to understand. It was the touch of nature that made them all akin. It was the acknowledgment of his headship—of her vassalage. At once all perceived that she gave up nothing of the woman, nothing of the wife, in her assumption of the office of teacher. On the contrary, there was not one of all those assembled there that did not know that she looked to her husband as her helper, her supporter, her friend, and that she did not look in vain.

Moultrie was surprised. It was not in human nature for him not to be pleased. He felt that she had won in the friendly contest that had been begun when the idea of the professorship was first suggested, and she had won in a way that had caused his heart to bound with love and admiration for her. But this was not the place for the display of feeling. He held out his hand to her, and then with the utmost composure led her back to the desk. A renewed burst of applause followed, and then every sound was hushed in anxious expectation of the words that were to come from the fair woman's lips.

“It is not usual,” she said, in her clear, sweet voice, which, without being raised to an unpleasant pitch, penetrated to every part of the large room, “for a medical lecture to begin with a text from scripture, and yet there is one so apposite to the remarks I am about to make, that I cannot refrain from quoting it, even if I am obliged, in so doing, to give it an application not intended by the sacred writer—‘In the midst of life we are in death.’ The thoughts which, in their ordinary acceptation, these few words evoke in our minds are among the most solemn that can occur to mankind, and there is not a day or an hour that their truth is not brought home to some of us with all the painful force which nothing so strongly as death can exert upon our hearts. Far be it from me to attempt to lessen their influence.

“But, after all, they are merely a terse statement of a fact which every one knows. The researches of science, however, enable us to give them another and perhaps a nobler interpretation, for they teach us that while we are really in the midst of death it is to that death that we owe our life.”

For nearly an hour, amid the most profound attention, she went on, adducing fact after fact and illustration after illustration in the elucidation of the doctrine that life results from death. She began with the elementary cell which is the origin of every tissue of the body, and from that advanced to the several organs which subserve the purposes of the living being in the performance of the functions which are necessary to its existence or health, and she showed that no sensation, no action of any kind, can be initiated or continued without the death of some portion of the body.

She was never at a loss for a word, and each well-

rounded phrase that fell from her lips was exactly the one that best expressed the thought she endeavored to convey. There was no attempt at oratory, no gesticulation, no impassioned utterances, but not a single sentence failed of its due effect, and there were just those proper inflections and pauses that served best to give emphasis to her ideas, and to relieve her remarks from the least suspicion of monotony.

Each division of her discourse occupied its logical position, and helped to make a symmetrical entirety, which could not fail to please every reflecting mind. But there were no forced constructions, no straining after effect, no appeals to the sympathies or prejudices of her auditors—nothing but scientific truths, expressed in simple English speech, which every one could understand, and from which deductions were drawn that no one could deny. And then she came to the end.

“Thus,” she said, “I have endeavored to show that the law which declares that there can be no force without a change in the constitution of matter is in as full effect throughout the domain of organic as of inorganic nature. We get the electricity that sends our messages over thousands of miles of wire by changes that are induced in a few pieces of zinc and a little sulphuric acid; we get the thoughts that enable us to invent the machines we use for this purpose, and by which the world is made subject to our wills, by the destruction of a few grains of the substance of our brains. The animal body is, therefore, an intricate piece of apparatus, which, in order that it may do its different kinds of work, consumes its own substance for the production of the requisite force. With every perception, therefore, that reaches the brain from without, with every thought that it con-

ceives, with every emotion that is felt, with every act of the will, a certain portion of its substance dies, and new brain take its place. Every contraction of a muscle by which the slightest motion is produced results directly from the death of a part of that muscle ; and with each pulsation of the heart a portion of the cardiac tissue is decomposed, and at the very instant its place is filled by new substance, ready for the work before it. The death of the old, the birth of the new, are going forward in our bodies with every instant that we exist, and this ceaseless course is that which we call life. At last, however, the struggle for the mastery is decided once and for all, so far as the earth is concerned. The processes of decay gain the ascendancy ; weakness and disease result, and eventually the triumph of death is complete. Here science pauses ; it can go no further ; but here faith comes in and bids us hope that with the last breath, the last throb of the heart, the last thought that flashes through the brain, a new existence is entered upon in another world where death is unknown."

For a moment the vast audience was as silent as the grave, apparently spellbound by the solemn words, spoken, with ineffable grace and dignity and feeling, that constituted the end of the lecture. Then round after round of applause swept through the hall ; men waved their hats, women their handkerchiefs, and some, overcome by the thoughts that the discourse excited, could only cover their faces with their hands and sob with the excess of their emotion. Old Bishop Crocker turned to his friend Mr. Constant, the eminent lawyer, diplomatist, and statesman, and declared, with tears in his eyes, that he had never heard a sermon from the pulpit that could compare with it for its teachings of natural religion.

On the platform every one hurried to congratulate Theodora on the marked ability she had displayed, her husband being the first to take her by the hand and to whisper his words of loving praise into her ear. "What you say to me," she answered, while her cheeks flushed with pleasure, "is worth all that the whole world could say." Then Mrs. Mowbray, Rachel Meadows, Miss Richardson, and the faculty and trustees expressed their thanks and commendations, and finally the Hon. Tom Burton was seen climbing up the platform and coming forward, with his intelligent face beaming with smiles.

"I'd climb Pike's Peak, Mrs. Moultrie," he said, holding out both hands in his effusiveness, "to express my thanks and my delight, if you were standing on its very apex. No man that ever I heard could talk like that. I wish you'd let me attend the whole course. I'll wear petticoats if it's necessary."

"No," answered Theodora, smiling; "this is the only time that the profane foot of man will be allowed to cross the threshold. To-morrow our work begins."

"Well, I'm very sorry, and for the first time in my life I wish I were a woman. But you can do me one favor. Introduce me to Miss Rachel Meadows."

"Not here," she said, kindly; "but if you will dine with us this evening I'll ask her also, and then you will have an opportunity of making her acquaintance."

He bowed his thanks and his acceptance, and was then crowded out of the way by Mrs. Pollux, in whose wake was Mrs. Castor, neither of whom had yet had a chance to unburden their minds.

"Such a success was never before seen in New York!" exclaimed the elder lady. "You will have to possess a better brain than most people, my dear, to prevent being

spoiled with the fine speeches and the flattering criticisms you will be sure to receive."

"Yes," joined in Mrs. Castor; "I think that not even Miss Gildersleeve can find fault with either your matter or your manner."

"She will, though, and with both," said Mrs. Pollux; "why, only last week the *Tattler* contained an insolent attack on a lady who had written a book, and not only that, but on the lady's father, and all because some friend of the editor did not like the gentleman."

"I am not acquainted with Miss Gildersleeve," said Theodora; "consequently, while she may abuse my lecture, she will scarcely venture to speak ill of me."

"Well, of course it's of no consequence what she says; but you wait till you see to-morrow's *Tattler*. If you don't find yourself and your husband and your father handled without gloves — yes, literally without gloves, for she never wears them — you may call me a false prophet."

Everybody was going away now; Mrs. Castor and Mrs. Pollux entered their own carriages, which had been ordered to come to the college, and Moultrie and Theodora drove home alone. It was beginning to drizzle a little, and the footman raised the top, thus converting the landau into a close carriage.

"Oh, Geoffrey!" exclaimed Theodora, as soon as she was shut off from the looks of vulgar eyes, and throwing herself into his arms as she spoke—"oh, Geoffrey, I am so happy!"

"Yes, dear," he said, caressing her, "and so am I. We have both that right, I think, after what you've done to-day."

"But it is not on account of the lecture," she contin-

ued, hiding her face in his breast. “I—I—did not know till a few minutes ago. But this is my first and last lecture. God has spoken! For oh, my husband, I am going to be a mother!”

He folded her to his heart and kissed her lips, and then her eyes, suffused as they were with tears of joy. The instinct of maternity was already making itself felt within her. A power stronger than that of either of them had interposed. What were lectures and medical schools to her now! How insignificant they all seemed to her, compared with the great treasure she bore in her bosom, and which henceforth, for many months to come, was to hold her in happy bondage!

CHAPTER XII.

INFATUATION.

NEITHER the dowager Mrs. Moultrie nor Mrs. Sincote was at Theodora's lecture. The former disapproved of the whole affair, thought that Moultrie ought to have interfered to prevent his wife disgracing the family by appearing in public on the rostrum, and, worst of all, as a lecturer in a medical college. She had predicted a signal failure, both as regarded the discourse and the character of the audience that might assemble to hear it.

Mrs. Sincote had been confined to her bed ever since the morning she had fainted, while Lal was telling the story of the deception which, by means of a false letter, had been practised upon an ancestor of the present John Tyscovus, and of the horrible fate that had overtaken the perpetrator. She had not been very ill, but the fainting attack had been followed by several hysterical paroxysms of grief, alternating with joy, during which she had shed tears and laughed to such an extent as to induce considerable bodily fatigue, and to make it necessary, Dr. Cady said, that she should not be subjected to any influence likely to cause the slightest mental excitement.

She had found it difficult to account for the fact that twice that morning she had been overcome, once almost fainting, and again completely losing consciousness. She

had insisted that the history Lal had quoted from the little vellum-bound book had had nothing whatever to do with the latter occurrence, and that the former was due to the circumstance that she had omitted taking her usual cup of coffee at breakfast. But when Moultrie came home, and Lal related both occurrences to him, he made very little comment, although it was evident to her that they had produced no light impression on his mind. Then when she told him of the loss of the copy of the letter she had made from the book, he became still more grave and thoughtful. So much for Mrs. Sincote.

Miss Billy Bremen, after her failure to interest the press in her account of the action of the vigilance committee against Messrs. Bosler and Kittle, and under the influence of the disappointment she had experienced consequent upon the election of Moultrie to Congress, had subsided into a condition of comparative obscurity. She had even abstained from attendance at the regular afternoon meetings of the executive committee of "The United Women of America;" for she knew that she had at least two enemies in that body—Miss Richardson and Miss Meadows—and they, probably, the most influential of all the members. She had, however, been unable to refrain from going to Theodora's lecture, actuated as she was, not by a desire to learn anything, but by an insatiable spirit of curiosity, that was one of the most prominent traits of her character. Accordingly, accompanied by one whom she knew to be her friend—Mrs. Cross, the lady with three husbands all alive—she had gone to the college, and had had her little soul filled with gall and wormwood on perceiving the magnificent success that had attended Mrs. Moultrie's effort. On the lecturer's appearance both she and her friend

were forced to admit to themselves that she was a very beautiful and distinguished-looking woman, dressed with consummate taste, and holding herself with an ease and dignity which both of them knew was as far from their attainment as is the moon from the stretched-out hand of an avaricious baby. Women in a large city like New York, vulgar though they may be, have so many opportunities for educating the eye, that they acquire the faculty of discriminating between the true and the false in all matters of æsthetics to a much greater extent than is generally supposed. At the same time, while possessing this power, they never, unless they really become refined, appear to have the ability to exercise good taste in the matters of their own dress and surroundings. They can recognize in others the fact that simplicity is not incompatible with elegance, but seem to be utterly incapable of applying the knowledge to themselves. Thus, if Theodora had appeared on the platform clothed, as was Miss Billy, in a sky-blue velvet hat with purple feathers, and a green silk frock slashed with yellow plush, no one in the room would have noticed the incongruity more than she. She would have complacently felt that what she could wear with advantage to her good looks, a woman like Theodora could not venture upon with impunity.

“I suppose her husband is too mean to give her diamonds,” was the only remark she made, until Theodora, moved by the impulse of the moment, had bowed to Moultrie. Then her pent-up feelings could be restrained no longer, and she burst out into a perfect tirade of invectives, conveyed in loud whispers to the ear of her companion.

“Such acting!” she exclaimed; “did you ever see the like of it? Of course it’s a put-up job. When they’re

at home I guess they fight like cat and dog. All these people do who are so sweet on one another in public. I guess he gave his consent on condition that she'd go down on her knees before the whole audience."

"Before I'd do that to the best man that God ever made I'd cut my throat," said Mrs. Cross, with an accent that was full of sanguinary emphasis. "But, of course, Miss Bremen, it's all a sham."

"What an awkward man *he* is," resumed Miss Billy. "Why didn't he give her his arm like a gentleman, instead of taking her by the hand, and holding it out as if he was a king, and she a queen. Perhaps that's the latest style from Colorado." And so she went on with her comments during the whole lecture, asserting at the end that it was full of infidel sentiments, and that she wondered how Christian people—clergymen, too—could listen to such horrible doctrines, and even applaud them.

Now, when Miss Richardson had announced so positively her conviction that Miss Billy was in love with Mr. Moultrie, she had, as is very often the case with people who make positive assertions on slight evidence, made a great mistake. So far from entertaining the slightest feelings of regard for this gentleman, she hated him with a degree of intensity which had, as we have seen, not stopped with him, but had extended to other members of his family. And she would very willingly have slaughtered each and every one of them in as cold blood as was felt by the butchers in her own *abattoir* toward the animals whose existences were there terminated, could she have had them in her power. The reason for this was by no means logical, but it was sufficient for a narrow-minded, ignorant, and malignant little animal like Miss Billy, and it consisted in the fact that Mr.

Luke Kittle's mother and her mother were first cousins. Now, as Mr. Moultrie had been instrumental in aiding Mr. Jim Bosler to shuffle off this mortal coil with ease to himself and advantage to the community, and had encouraged the Vigilance Committee in performing the like kindly offices for her cousin, the facts were deemed by the lady sufficient cause for hating his whole family.

But while Miss Billy was very far from being in love with Moultrie, the tender passion had touched her from another quarter. Miss Richardson had mistaken the direction of the lady's glances, for they were not directed toward the candidate, but at the gentleman who was advocating his claims, the Hon. Tom Burton. It was not the first time she had seen him. In fact, she had a slight—very slight acquaintance with him, his law firm in Lutetia being her legal advisers in a suit for damages that she had instituted against some Texan cattle-dealers for a failure to deliver a lot of beeves to her in New York, according to contract. He had, representing the firm, met her two or three times in a business capacity, and Miss Billy had lost her heart. Thus far she had made no progress in gaining his affection, the truth being that she had never once occurred to his mind outside of his business relations with her. He did not even know that she had attended the meeting at which her anger had been so greatly roused against Moultrie and Rachel Meadows.

Now, Miss Billy had a sharp pair of eyes, and her mind was as shrewd in a small way as that of any woman, or man either, for that matter, that ever lived. She had kept her little dull orbs fixed on Burton while Rachel was speaking, and she had observed that he was all attention and admiration. There was no mistaking this

fact. Then, when she had concluded, she noticed that his looks followed her till she had resumed her seat, and it was impossible for him to keep his gaze away from her, try as he might. From all of which she argued that the man with whom she was in love had bestowed his affection on another woman; and with the sort of feminine logic which women like Miss Billy exhibit, she had at once made herself an enemy of that woman. There might have been a slight modicum of reason in the matter if she had turned her hatred on Burton; but that she should vent her spite on Rachel was not explainable upon any other hypothesis than that she herself being a woman was possessed of some of the characteristics peculiar to the more ignoble specimens of the sex. As to the taunt she had made to Rachel of being in love with Moultrie, Miss Billy was well aware that she had uttered a lie, pure and simple.

The Hon. Tom Burton, late Member of Congress from the State of Texas, and applicant for the position of consul to Barcelona, had dined with the Moultries, and had had the pleasure of escorting Mrs. Moultrie to dinner and of sitting next to Rachel Meadows. It was a very enjoyable dinner to him, although his attentions and his affections, it must be said, were for a time pretty equally divided between Rachel and Lal and Theodora. He reflected, however, that he had no possible chance with either of the other ladies, and later in the evening restricted his conversation almost entirely to the only one upon whom he could hope to make an impression. For versatility in knowledge and occupation few men were the equals of this gentleman. Educated at Harvard, he had, on the breaking out of the war between the States, hurried home just as he was about to graduate,

and had enlisted in the service of the State of Texas, and afterward, by absorption, in that of the Confederacy. His promotion had been rapid, for in less than six months he had risen from the rank of private to that of brigadier-general, obtaining his promotion on the ground of his superior education, his dash and bravery, but mainly on account of a couple of most audacious and successful raids which he had made into the State of Kansas, with a couple of squadrons of cavalry. For the last of these, during which he had met and defeated a force twice as numerous as his own, besides bringing back with him large numbers of horses and cattle, he had been jumped at one step from the grade of major to that of brigadier-general. But it was not long thereafter that he encountered the fate of many less brave and daring commanders. He had a little too much contempt for his adversaries, and one day he was raided in turn by a Union brigadier, with two regiments of infantry. And while General Burton and his men were bivouacking and enjoying themselves as well as their limited facilities for obtaining a dip into the "flesh-pots of Egypt" permitted, and while their horses were picketed out on the prairie, he and his whole command were, in the expressive language of the day, "gobbled up" and marched off on foot to a railroad station, whence they were conveyed to a Northern military prison. Here General Burton passed the few months remaining till the close of the war, suffering the most poignant anguish over the wreck of his military aspirations, and chagrin at the method of his capture. "To think," he said, "that two regiments of cavalry should have been captured by an equal force of infantry. The finest soldiers in the Confederacy—fellows accustomed to ride horseback almost from the day

they were born—to be wiped out in this way by a lot of Yankee school-teachers, clerks, and farm hands on foot, is hard. Yes, it's damned hard! I don't think I can ever lift up my head again. I am tired of the war, and if any man dares to give me a military title after I get out of this hole I'll kill him as sure as my name's Tom Burton." He got out in two or three months, but no one ever ventured to call him "general."

Then he began the study of the law, and soon after admission to the bar became the leading lawyer in Lutetia, the town in which he resided. Employed in several important railway cases, he had received large fees, and soon—for nothing, even in Texas, succeeds like success—his practice grew to such large proportions that he was obliged to take a partner. Then, like a wise man, he turned over all the drudgery to the junior, and, unwisely perhaps, went into politics. He could have had almost any State office—and he did take two or three—but he pined for national distinction. No rebel was ever more thoroughly reconstructed than was he; but he was on the wrong side to get anything from the party then in power. District attorneyships, judgeships, collectorships, consulships, etc., etc., were not for men of his way of thinking. But he could go to Congress. So he went, and without any opposition worthy of the name.

He had served one term, and then he desired a re-nomination. But his course had been too independent to suit the party managers. So a more subservient individual, a German-Israelite, a good enough man in his way perhaps, was substituted in his place.

Burton had always been noted for a certain kind of dashing oratory, which took universally with the people.

If he had chosen to offer himself as an independent

candidate, he would easily have swept everything before him ; but he was a strict party man in his own State, and nothing would have induced him to set himself up against the managers or "bosses" that looked after the politics of his side. But he had while in Congress distinguished himself as an advocate of free-trade, and had made a speech on the subject that had at once attracted the attention of the Free-Trade League. This organization, on the lookout for able speakers to expound their principles to the people, especially the artisans of the country, had opened negotiations with him. And so, as his term in Congress had expired, he was engaged to enter upon the crusade against protection that had been instituted. He was to speak at least once a week for one year, and was to receive one hundred dollars for each address. This suited him exactly, for he had about ten thousand dollars *per annum* from his practice and investments he had made, and was thus enabled to travel extensively, to live "like a gentleman" in New York, and to take occasional risks on horse races—this latter being the only form of gambling—if it can be called such—in which he indulged.

His success at the North as a speaker had been very great, and the mere announcement of his name was sufficient to draw a large audience to hear him. He had done effective work for Moultrie.

But his engagement with the free-traders was nearly at an end, and the Hon. Tom began to sigh for the cares and the honors of a public office. He had made up his mind never again to live in Texas. He had tasted the delights of a life, with its freedom and its luxuries, in the metropolis, and he had in consequence become unfit for a rural existence. "New York," he

declared nearly every day of his life, "was the only place in the whole country fit to live in." Here he had his clubs, his good dinners, his theatres, operas, and, above all, his horses. Life in Texas would have been insupportable to him.

The getting of an office was, however, a matter of difficulty, his political principles being such as not to commend him to the party in power, unless some way could be devised for making use of him. Up to the present time no way had been discovered for bringing his abilities into the service of his country; but Moultrie's election, and the knowledge of the fact that he would possess considerable influence as an independent member, had given him fresh hope. In the mean time he had busied himself in looking into certain schemes that had been started for making money, or, perhaps, for getting hold of other people's money, his own among the rest, and some of them had seriously commended themselves to his attention. Among those were the "New York Automatic Ventilating and Heat Regulating Company," an organization that proposed to carry out the objects mentioned in its name by first getting contracts for putting their apparatus into all the public buildings and schoolhouses of the city, at an expense to the taxpayers of over a million of dollars, but to themselves of less than a hundred thousand. The system, however, was good, entirely scientific, and practicable. As yet, however, no contracts had been obtained; and as the company had neither the money nor the dishonesty to excite them to the purchase of the proper officials, it was not likely that the very beautiful arrangements devised would ever reach a higher stage than that of the scientific toy. Burton had invested three thousand dol-

lars in this enterprise, with the probability that he would never see the money again.

Then he had "gone into" mines, and had become interested in patents of various kinds, and had bought up waste lands in New Jersey, with the intention of converting them into cranberry-farms, and many other things, good, bad, and indifferent. To be sure, he had always been regardful of the truth of the statement that—

" Little ships keep close to shore,
While larger vessels venture more."

He had always recognized the fact that he was financially a "little ship," and that it was necessary for him to "keep close to shore;" so that while his gains from his investments had not been great, his losses had been small; and, on the whole, he was a little ahead.

The conversation at the dinner-table had, of course, as it was the principal event of the day, so far as the party was concerned, turned on the lecture. The knowledge that had come to Theodora, and that she had communicated to her husband, had put them both into more than usual good-humor, for they had begun to have fears that their union might not be blessed with offspring.

Now, however, all apprehensions were removed, and the fact caused them more real joy than they had experienced at any time since their marriage.

Of course Mr. Burton was enthusiastic in his praise of Theodora's style of oratory, but he was careful to put in a saving clause relative to Rachel Meadows, whom he had heard speak so well at the meeting of Moultrie's supporters, held just before the election. Both addresses were, however, he declared, astonishing instances of what woman could do in the way of oratory. For

clear statement of fact he had never known either to be equalled.

Then he branched off into politics, and spoke of the effort that would be made at the ensuing session of Congress to obtain some modification of the existing tariff. The South, he said, was always ready for free-trade, and the West was getting ready to wheel into line. Even the East was beginning to show signs of desiring a change. The cotton manufacturers of New England were already ripe for it. They had now no foreign market, and as to those of wool, how could they compete with outsiders, when they were taxed so heavily by the duty on the raw material they employed? Of all the ways of protecting American manufactures, that of putting almost prohibitory duties on the materials they used was the most idiotic. Then turning to Rachel, who had listened very attentively to all his remarks, and was pleased with his versatility, he said :

“All women are natural-born free-traders, Miss Meadows, and the enemies of custom-houses. They are all in favor of buying in the cheapest market and selling in the dearest, and they will all smuggle when they can.”

“How can you expect us,” answered Rachel, smiling, “to take an interest in the enforcement of laws which you give us no share in making? You govern us by brute force, and then expect us to be loyal to the institutions of the country! If we were strong enough we would rebel.”

“Were you ever a rebel, Miss Meadows?” said Burton, with a laugh. “No, I am sure you have not been. Now, I was once one of the most venomous rebels you ever saw. You wouldn’t think it to look at me, for now I’m as gentle as a sucking pig. Rebellion doesn’t pay.

Four months in a Northern prison and the cessation of war knocked all rebellious tendencies out of me. My powers of resistance are gone. If a man were to open that door, and say, 'Burton, give me a thousand dollars, or I'll sue you for it,' I would take out my check-book and write him a check for the sum, and I'd save money by the operation, too. There's another moral to that, 'Never go to law!' "

"And yet you are a lawyer, Mr. Burton," said Theodora. "If everybody took your advice, your occupation would be gone."

"Yes, but I trust an honest one. However, advice of that sort, like every other kind, is never heeded by those whom it would most benefit. But I have decided to abandon the law; I have found another occupation that will suit me better, and that will prove far more profitable."

"What have you got hold of now, Burton?" asked Moultrie, laughing. "The affair you had taken up when I last heard anything on the subject of your numerous short and easy methods to wealth was a machine for making surgical bandages."

"Yes, that was the last; but after due inquiry I gave that up. You see, there are about sixty thousand physicians in the United States; and admitting that each one would use ten bandages a year, that makes six hundred thousand that would be required. Now, allow four hundred thousand more for the hospitals, and we have a total of one million. The machine has a capacity of one million a week, so that, you see, we could supply the whole United States with bandages for a year by working one week. The other fifty-one weeks we should be doing nothing. Now, as probably it would be a long

time before every surgeon and hospital in the country would take our bandages—for if each doctor chose to roll his own, he could make them as cheaply as we could—I came to the conclusion that there was no money in it.”

“A very sensible conclusion, I think!” exclaimed Moultrie. “But what is the scheme?”

“I am going,” said Burton, looking around the table, and engaging each one’s attention, “to establish a manufactory of gondolas.”

“A what!”

“A manufactory of gondolas—those black boats that they use in Venice for going about the streets in.”

Every one laughed but Rachel. She looked interested and serious, while the others evidently regarded the statement as a joke.

“Since you are the only one that thinks I am in earnest, Miss Meadows,” said Burton, looking as serious as he could under the circumstances, “I will address myself to you. The others may listen if they care to, but I wish them to understand that my remarks are for your private ear.”

“Go on, Burton,” laughed Moultrie. “We shall listen, even if, like other listeners, we do not hear any good of ourselves. But let me ask you how many cities there are in this country that use gondolas for purposes of locomotion?”

“Not one, ‘most potent, grave, and reverend seignior,’ so far as I know. But what has that to do with it? However, don’t interrupt me by answering, please. I am speaking to Miss Meadows, whose intelligent mind is the only one here that appreciates me. Isn’t that so, Miss Meadows?”

"I don't know," answered Rachel, with a blush ;
"I'm sure I think you are very enterprising."

"Thanks ! Now, give me your attention, please, and I will convince you that your good opinion is not misplaced.

"I have ascertained," he continued, after taking a sip of Musigny, which was being served with the canvas-backs, "from the Italian consul, who is a Venetian and a friend of mine, that over a thousand new gondolas are required in Venice every year. A good gondola costs there over twelve hundred dollars, and fine ones a great deal more than that. The one used by the Doge is valued at more than ten thousand dollars, and there are many others worth almost as much. However, putting them at twelve hundred dollars each, and we have a total of one million two hundred thousand dollars invested every year in gondolas. I have had estimates made here by some of our best boat-builders and upholsterers, and I find that they can be made and delivered in Venice, ready for use, for about two hundred dollars each—that is, the whole one thousand would cost but two hundred thousand dollars, being a yearly profit of a million for the manufacturer. Now, my friend," addressing Moultrie, who, with the others, excepting Rachel, was laughing heartily, "you may laugh as much as you please ; but if you know of good honest work that is as likely to prove remunerative to the capitalist as this, I should like to hear of it."

"I am sure it is an admirable scheme, Mr. Burton," said Rachel, "and I think you deserve a great deal of credit for thinking it out so thoroughly. Mamma and I are going to Venice in February, and—"

"You are going to Venice !" interrupted Burton, his

face beaming with pleasure. "That is delightful ; I was just going to request our friend here to permit me to change my application for the Barcelona consulship to one for Venice. Consuls are allowed to transact private business, so that I could easily look after the interests of the ' Venetian Gondola Manufacturing Company,' and at the same time attend to my public duties. The fact that you are going to be there, Miss Meadows, is the strongest reason I could have for wishing to be there too."

Moultrie smiled, Lal looked a little surprised, while Theodora was embarrassed at this open love-making of the Hon. Tom. Certainly, she had never seen so much frankness or such unstinted compliments in all her life. At first she was in doubt whether the gentleman was in earnest, or whether he was simply dealing out unmitigated flattery, with the object of making himself agreeable. But a good look at Burton was sufficient to remove all incertitude from her mind. If he was not in earnest, then certainly she did not know how to read language or facial expression. She verily believed that but for the presence of the others Burton would have thrown his arms around Rachel, and then and there have asked her to be his wife. He appeared to feel himself making a charge as he was accustomed to do on his raids during the war, and to be overcoming all obstacles by pure dash and momentum.

As to Rachel, she received his speeches and his marked attention with apparent great satisfaction and complacency. When he said that the fact of her going to Venice was the determining factor in causing him to desire that city for a residence, she blushed a little, and a quiet smile, or rather the least possible expansion of her

features, appeared on her countenance, but she made no reply. Why should she? Silence was more expressive than words.

Evidently, the gallant Texan was contented with himself and with the manner that Rachel exhibited toward him. The party was too small for much dual conversation, but occasionally there had been an opportunity for him to put in a word or two in a low tone, expressing his high appreciation of her independence of character, of his admiration of a particular flower that she wore in her corsage bouquet, of an antique ring that her father, the Commodore, had brought from Greece, and that encircled the second finger on the hand next to him, and—he had heard that Rachel was an astronomer—of his great interest in the study of the heavenly bodies. He was thinking all the time, however, of the incident at Galveston, when he had been the only auditor of her lecture on “woman’s rights,” and when, in pity for her loneliness, he had offered to escort her to her hotel. So far as he could perceive she had not recognized him. “Poor girl!” he thought, “she was too much cut up then to look at me even.” He resolved, however, that before he left the house he would recall the circumstance to her recollection. It was the starting-point of his love, which, notwithstanding his prejudices against the cause she was then advocating, had made a deeper impression than he had thought. Besides, had he not the right to say that he had known her a full year? Surely, after a man has known a woman for a year he has some right to be a little demonstrative toward her if he experiences a touch of the tender passion! Lal was not disposed to talk much. This was the day Tyscovus was expected to reach St. Louis, and in two days more he ought to be

in New York, if everything went well. Perhaps he was even now reading the letter that she had sent, and that had been waiting for him at the Planters' House. He might telegraph his arrival and inform her when he would reach New York ; but he was not a great patron of that means of communication, except in mere business matters. He seemed to have a dread of exhibiting, even to the two or three necessary individuals, his feelings, or even his movements, so far as they concerned her. She had never had a telegram from him except the one announcing his election and his intention of being in New York in a few days.

Necessarily, too, she had thought much during the last few days of her future movements. She knew that Tyscovus would pass the winter in Washington, and she experienced a very natural desire to do likewise ; but her good sense had come to her aid, as it had often done before, and she had finally determined that she would remain in New York and go on with her work. As she advanced in knowledge, the desire for more grew upon her, and she looked forward with delight to the time when Tyscovus would be her instructor. But she knew that she would be far more capable of advancing under his guidance after she had become better acquainted with the elementary principles that were now being instilled into her. And hence she had decided adversely to the emotion that filled her heart, content to suffer present pain for the ultimate good of her future husband, as well as of herself ; for she well understood that in making the sacrifice of her own feelings she was acting as much with a view to his happiness as to her own.

Still, she had made her decision without regard to him, and with a saving clause, which she felt might yet alter

her determination, that if he was *very* anxious for her to go to Washington, she might be obliged to yield to his wish. Therefore, she felt a little unsettled, and that, after all, the matter rested with Tyscovus. Perhaps, too, some way might be found by which she could not only accompany her father to Washington and pass the winter in that city, but might continue her studies with as much thoroughness as they were now receiving. If she had had some experience of the efficacy of riches and social position, she would have known that there are few things that their combined power cannot accomplish.

To say that Moultrie was proud of his wife, would scarcely express the full extent of the feeling he experienced. When she had exhibited so markedly before a thousand people the sense of her dependence on him and her recognition of his supremacy, he was, as we have said, entirely taken by surprise. Such magnanimity was a revelation to him. He knew better than any one else in the world all the good qualities of his wife ; he understood just how generous she could be when occasion required. And if he had not given her credit for such sublime self-abnegation and loftiness of soul as that one act showed her to possess, it was because there had never before been an occasion of sufficient importance to call out her latent wealth of nobility.

When in the carriage on her way home she had announced her determination to resign her professorship, he had said nothing on the subject, for his mind was completely engrossed with the other weighty piece of information she had given him, although he had seen no reason why she should have arrived at such a conclusion. On their arrival home, however, he had at once mentioned the subject. She was in her boudoir drinking a

cup of tea when he brought the matter up for discussion.

It was difficult to outdo Moultrie in magnanimity. He felt that, although he had acted honestly, he had kept back something when he had given his consent and approval to her acceptance. He had withheld his advice, actuated by several motives, all of which were entirely honorable, and based upon the most devoted affection. Chief among these had been his desire that she should be free to do as she pleased, untrammelled in the slightest respect ; and another, scarcely second to it, was his conviction that she would ere long of her own accord renounce her connection with the medical college. The renunciation had, however, come sooner than he had expected, and just at the time when he had determined to urge her to continue the course so auspiciously begun, satisfied as he now was that she had found the vocation the requirements of which she could not only adequately supply, but one that was best calculated to insure her happiness. His doubt on both these heads had helped to influence him in withholding his advice.

But although he had been convinced on all points, and was now strenuous in advising her to reconsider her last formed determination, Theodora was firm in her conviction that she ought to give the matter up at once. There were many mental and physical reasons why she should do this, besides the overwhelming one that she had now an object in life that would absorb all the interest she had to give. Her heart was large, but it was not big enough to hold a professorship in a medical college besides her husband and baby. To be sure, he had filled it ; but then his duties required him to be absent from her one third of his time, and she could very readily,

she thought, have occupied this period as well with the professorship as with anything else. She took nothing from him. Perhaps after awhile she might have found—in accordance with Lal's fears—occasion to change her mind in this respect. But now her baby—his baby, was coming. No, there was no longer room for the professorship of physiology. The professorship "must go." And it went. Fortunately, the trustees were all women; and though there were regrets, there were no heart-burnings on either side.

But to return to the dinner. Like other dinners, it came to an end, and then, after Moultrie and Burton had each finished a small cigar, they joined the ladies in the drawing-room, whither we will follow them.

CHAPTER XIII.

A DECLARATION AND ITS CONSEQUENCES.

WHEN the gentlemen entered the drawing-room Rachel Meadows, who was a very brilliant performer on the piano, was just finishing an exceedingly difficult yet masterly composition of Rubenstein's. Burton walked rapidly toward her as the last harmonious bangs were being given.

"Don't stop, Miss Meadows!" he exclaimed, seeing that she was about to rise from the instrument. "Please, as a personal favor to me, play something more. If you only knew how music moves and delights me, I'm sure you would, out of very charity, grant my request."

"I'll play for you with great pleasure, Mr. Burton," said Rachel, with sweetness, sitting down again. "What shall I play?"

"Anything you like, Miss Meadows," said the Hon. Tom, who was rapidly becoming infatuated. "Your taste is good enough for me."

"I'll play for you one of Liszt's Rhapsodies Hongroises." She struck off at once into a piece that called for all her skill and sentiment, and she used both with such effect that when she had finished and looked up at Burton, who was leaning over her, she saw that his eyes were full of tears, and that he was only able to articulate a few indistinct words of thanks.

"I'm not ashamed," he said, after a moment or two,

during which he had, by means of a little cough and a drawing up of his figure, recovered his composure, "to let you see how easily I am touched by such music as yours. I don't know that it's a bad point in a man. At any rate, I can't help it."

"It is nothing to be ashamed of, Mr. Burton, especially in you, who have fought so gallantly and have shown in every way that you possess so many fine manly qualities."

"How did you know I had fought? How did you know anything about me?"

"Mrs. Moultrie has been telling me all about you, and sounding your praises."

"God bless her!" exclaimed Burton, instinctively. "I mean," he said, recovering himself, "that she's very kind to speak of me at all."

"Yes, she said you had fought splendidly. But you were on the wrong side, Mr. Burton."

"Whichever side was the opposite to the one you were on was the wrong one, of course. But I'm thoroughly reconstructed, Miss Meadows. There isn't a man that lives who would lay down his life for the old flag sooner than I would."

"That's very nice; I like to hear a man talk like that." Then, after a little pause: "I had a friend who was killed at the battle of Mobile Bay."

"In the navy?"

"Yes, he was a naval officer."

"A very dear friend?"

"Yes," with a sigh, "he was a dear friend."

Burton did not fail to mark the sigh or the gravity of manner with which Rachel had spoken of the incident. She had probably been engaged to him. Still, she did

not appear to have taken his death so seriously to heart as to be morbid on the subject. Nearly ten years had elapsed since that battle was fought, and if she had been engaged then she must have been a rather precocious young woman, as she did not now look to be a day over twenty-five. The Hon. Tom Burton was a man of action. Doubt, suspense, were intolerable to him. So soon as his mind was made up on any subject, he went ahead ; but if the occasion required it, with such delicacy and gentleness of manner that even those who felt that liberties were being taken with them could not find it in their hearts to be angry.

Besides, he felt that he had a right to know everything concerning Rachel Meadows that might influence him in his course toward her. He was already head and ears in love with her, but he had always said that he would never marry a woman who had ever been engaged to another man. It was, therefore, a matter of immediate and vital importance to him ; for if Rachel's heart had never yet been touched, and if he could succeed in making the first deep impression upon it, it was not at all outside of the potentialities that he would declare himself within the following ten minutes. He must find out, therefore, and at once, what had been the relations between Rachel and the young naval officer, but he must go about the business with delicacy and tact, so as to run no risk of wounding her sensibilities or of appearing like an impertinent busybody, meddling with other people's affairs.

" Miss Meadows," he said, at last, " do you know that you and I are old acquaintances ?"

" Old acquaintances ! How is that ?"

" Yes ; I have known you for almost a year."

Seeing that Rachel did not understand him, Burton continued :

“ It was nearly a year ago that I first met you. You were giving a lecture in Galveston. I was one of your audience, and when you had finished, seeing that you were alone, I offered to escort you to your hotel—an offer, however, which you very politely but firmly declined.”

“ Are you the gentleman who, pitying my forlorn condition and my palpable failure, stayed all through my lecture, and then kindly— ”

“ Yes,” interrupted Burton, “ I am the man.”

“ How strange that we should meet again and under such different conditions ! You were my only audience then. Everybody else had left the hall ; I felt as though I should die of vexation and a sense of my failure to interest the people in what was then so near my heart.”

“ It looks to me very much like destiny, Miss Meadows. We can’t control fate, you know.”

“ I have often thought of that incident. It was very kind of you to stay and to listen to what you did not care about, merely, too, to prevent my being left utterly alone. And very good of you to offer me your assistance afterward. I only declined, Mr. Burton, because my maid was in the adjoining room, and the hotel was just across the street.”

“ I took a great interest in you then, Miss Meadows,” said the Hon. Tom, with his most diplomatic manner—
“ an interest, I may say, that has never diminished. I heard you speak the other night at Moultrie’s meeting, and then I felt the emotion which had lain dormant in my breast quicken into life, until now—”

“ Oh, Mr. Burton ! ” exclaimed Rachel, who instinctively felt that this plunging admirer was getting into

water so deep that he might have difficulty in extricating himself. "You were not at the battle of Mobile Bay?"

"No," said Burton, recovering himself and recollecting a point which had gone out of sight; "I was in the cavalry, and there was no place for us in a naval fight. But you were speaking of a dear friend who was killed; I should think you must have been very young at that time—too young, in fact, to—to—"

"Too young," exclaimed Rachel, laughing, "to have been in love! No, I was not in love with him," she continued, seriously, "but I liked him very much. I was only fifteen then, but we had been a good deal together, and if he had lived I might have liked him still more."

Burton felt thankful for the Confederate bullet that had taken this dangerous friend out of the way, though he was hypocritical enough to look very grave. His resolution was formed in an instant. He would marry Rachel Meadows if he could; and he would, if he did not propose that night, make sure, if possible, that his case was not a hopeless one.

"You were speaking at dinner of going to Venice," he said. "Do you sail soon?"

"We go in February, to remain abroad at least a year—perhaps longer."

"If my plans succeed, I shall go at about the same time; I hope to see a good deal of you there, Miss Meadows. Old friends, such as we are, with so many similar tastes, ought to find pleasure in each other's society."

"You are fond of music. Do you play or sing?"

"I used to play the guitar when I was a much younger man than I am now, and strum a little in the way of accompaniment on the piano."

“ Oh, Mr. Burton, then you sing ! Sit down here and sing something now.”

“ But since I have gone into war and politics and gondola-making,” continued Burton, “ I’ve given up music altogether, except my love for it. That I shall never renounce.”

“ But you must recollect something. Mrs. Moultrie,” continued Rachel, addressing Theodora, who was talking with her husband and Lalage in a remote part of the room, “ Mr. Burton sings, and I am trying to induce him to do so now. Won’t you join your supplications to mine ?”

“ He had better sing now while he is rejoicing over his gondola scheme,” laughed Moultrie, “ for I see by the evening papers that the Venetians are contemplating filling up their canals and laying down a net-work of street railways. Doesn’t that take the romance out of you, Burton, as well as demolish your financial visions ?”

“ Oh, they’ll talk about it for ten years before they begin to do it,” said Burton, “ and by that time we shall have manufactured a hundred thousand gondolas. But,” turning to Rachel, “ I’ll sing for you without any solicitations from them. And I’ll sing a little serenade that fits exactly to our relations as they will be in Venice. You must imagine yourself at the window of an old *palazzo*, now a hotel, and me in a gondola underneath. Mind, now, this is a true story.”

Then running his fingers over the keys in a way that showed he was more of an adept at the instrument than his words implied, he sang in a strong though melodious tenor voice :

“ My gondola’s waiting below, love,
Oh, look from thy lattice to-night !

The waters invitingly flow, love,
 The moon on their bosom shines bright.
 Then come, and we'll glide
 O'er the rippling tide,
 And we'll watch the gay crowd on the shore ;
 And the gondolier's song,
 As our bark sweeps along,
 Shall keep time to the dip of his oar.

“ Oh, dread not the balcony's height, love,
 It is but a step to my arms ;
 Think not the silk ladder too light, love,
 Nay, dear one, dismiss thine alarms.
 Oh, don't let us miss
 Such a twilight as this,
 But we'll seize the bright hours as they flee ;
 Remember the sweetest
 Are ever the fleetest ;
 Then haste, love, and share them with me.”

The plaudits from the other end of the room were loud and long as Burton finished the song, and many encomiums were passed on his voice and method and the applicability of the subject to the one they had been discussing. They did not know a tithe of the truth they were unwittingly speaking, for he had sung it, intending that Rachel should, as he said, take the words as being addressed to her.

She had stood by his side while he was singing, and she was still standing, her hands resting on the piano. Every word of the song had reached her ears, for his enunciation was faultless, and the simple melody to which they had been sung had served to increase the effect they were intended to produce. She was moved by them in a way that she had never been moved before. What did this man—this frank, open-hearted, warm-hearted, impetuous, masterful man, mean ? Was he court-

ing her, or was he trying to make fun of her? Her associations had hitherto, with the exception of the episode of ten years ago, been confined almost exclusively to members of her own sex, most of whom had united in abusing man and holding him up before her eyes as inferior to woman in everything but brute force. But here was a man, strong, brave, intelligent, who had acquired a national reputation as an orator, and of whom her friends at the other end of the room had spoken as the soul of honor, showing that he had all a woman's gentleness and kindness of heart, and who, if he was not false to the core, was strenuously making love to her. If this was courting, she liked it. She remembered that, only a few days ago, she had told her friend Miss Richardson that she had often, in her loneliness, yearned for a refuge in the arms of some strong man whom she could love, and upon whom she might rely as a protector and guide. Was this the man? Had he come so soon after the expression of her wish—so soon as almost to seem to her as though it had been specially ordered by the interposition of a higher power?

And yet she felt afraid of him. It was all so new to her that she could scarcely understand it. What could he see in her to excite such evident admiration—an admiration that was being expressed in every word and look, and in every action that had any reference to her? If she spoke to him, his face at once lit up with a bright expression, which showed his interest and his pleasure. If she turned her eyes toward him, she found that his were fixed on her, and that he had been regarding her as though she were some kind of a magnet attracting his gaze, whether he would or no.

And now this song! How was she to take it? He

had declared that he meant it seriously, and yet it contained expressions that were surely only such as a lover might apply to his mistress, and altogether inadmissible from a gentleman to a lady with no other tie than that of acquaintanceship between them. The situation was an embarrassing one, and she could not make up her mind how she should act. She therefore awaited with anxiety the end of the song, for then she knew she should have to say something. And yet it was pleasant to have this strong man at her feet making love to her. It was much pleasanter than the devotion of Miss Richardson, but it was at the same time much more perplexing. What should she say when he had finished the song? The last lines were being sung; she knew that a few more words would be uttered, and then a crisis would be reached. There was no middle course that she could take. She must either approve or disapprove. True, she might regard it all as a joke, but he had told her he meant every word of it, and that it was "a true story." And, besides, she did not wish to treat it as a joke. To do so after what he had said, and especially after the feeling manner with which he was singing, would, she thought, be idiotic. It would certainly be rude. But the end was approaching. The last line,

"Then haste, love, and share them with me,"

had come, and he was playing the few notes of the *finale*. Yes, he had stopped, and there she was, standing by his side, with her hands resting on the piano, looking, she had no doubt, like a goose—certainly feeling like one. The situation every moment became more awkward. If he would only say something! Or if the ground would only open and swallow her up she would be thankful. But

no ; there he sat looking at her. She felt he was looking at her ; she *knew* he was looking at her ; and yet she dared not turn her eyes toward him, for then he would see that they were full of tears. Presently she became aware—how she could never determine—that he was doing something. She did not know what ; but she was sure that, after his imperative manner, he was taking the initiative and doing something that would bring the crisis to an end. Perhaps she felt the jarring—if there were any—of the piano, or perhaps she heard the gentle gliding of his hand over the polished surface. She did not have long to cogitate, for in a moment she felt his hand placed on top of hers. Now she *must* determine, and that instantly. Longer delay would compromise her past redemption. She might draw her hand away and assume an indignant air, and say, “ Mr. Burton ! ” or, in the phrase of the Sierras, “ words to that effect,” and then he would retreat, and she would be relieved from further attacks. Or she might do nothing, and then—why, then that would be the end of the crisis, too, but in a way as different from the other ending as day is from night. It would be her “ day,” the other would be her “ night.”

“ Rachel, will you ‘ share them with me ’ ? ”

For the life of her she could not have spoken a word. She felt a strangling sensation in her throat, and her eyes were still full of tears, that were falling like rain on the Hon. Tom’s hand, which hid her own little one entirely from sight.

“ My darling ! ”—oh, how sweet to her were the words !—“ don’t speak. We can’t go any farther just now ; but if those people were out of the next room I’d—well, never mind. We’ll go to Venice together, and,

by the immortal shade of Sam Houston ! you shall have the finest gondola that ever floated on the Euxine Sea."

" But Venice is not on the Euxine," said poor Rachel, taking refuge in Burton's bad geography to bring the situation to an end. " It's on the Adriatic."

" Of course it is. But you've knocked everything out of my head except the idea of your own sweet self. What do I care now whether it's on the Euxine or the Adriatic ?"

" But you are so sudden ! You don't give one time to think."

" That's true," said Burton, after a moment's reflection. " But you'll be going home soon, I suppose, and I'll hand you into your carriage, and I'll bid you good-night, and if you say to me then, ' Good-night, Tom,' I'll know it's all right, and to-morrow, at three o'clock, I'll come to see you, and then we'll settle all the preliminaries. That's fair, isn't it ?"

" Yes," answered Rachel, with a smile that went straight to Burton's heart, and left no doubt on his mind as to what she would say. " And now I think we had better join our friends."

" Of course, dear," said the perfidious Tom, as they walked slowly into the other room, " I want to leave your mind perfectly unbiassed ; but at the same time, if you should say—even by accident—' Good-night, Mr. Burton,' I should turn right round and make my way to the East River by rapid stages."

" And what would you do when you got there ?" said Rachel, who had now quite recovered her composure, and who was in the vein for torturing her captive, and who, moreover, enjoyed every fresh declaration of infatuation that he might make.

“Jump in,” replied Burton, sententiously.

“But why the East River?” persisted Rachel, with a smile which gave evidence of the delighted frame of mind that she was in.

“Well, it’s nearer, and, besides, it’s deeper, and colder, and nastier, and the tide’s stronger, and my dead-body would be swept away out to sea, and never more be gazed upon by mortal eye.”

“But it would be such a pretty thing for the mermaids to look at! Don’t you think, Mrs. Moultrie, that Mr. Burton’s dead body would be a refreshing sight to the mermaids?” she continued, addressing Theodora.

“Miss Meadows,” said the mendacious Burton, “has been proposing that I should drown myself in the East River in order to afford a pleasing spectacle to the mermaids.”

“Never having seen Mr. Burton’s dead body,” said Theodora, laughing, “and not being acquainted with the æsthetic proclivities of mermaids, I am unable to answer the question.”

“Besides, there are no mermaids in the East River,” said Moultrie. “There may have been once, but sludge acid and petroleum have long since killed them. You will have to drown yourself in the Adriatic, Burton, after you get to Venice.”

“A telegram, sir!” said François, who had quietly entered the room and was holding a salver before Moultrie.

“Is it for me, father?” said Lal, anxiously.

“No, my dear; it is directed to me. Sign the receipt, please, while I read it.”

Moultrie opened the envelope, and as he read the dispatch a troubled expression passed over his features.

He held it before his eyes for some little time, as though reading it over and over again, in the effort to get at its true meaning. Then he returned it to the envelope, which he placed in the breast-pocket of his coat.

“There is no answer,” he said to François, who had remained in the room. “How well you play, Miss Meadows,” he continued, addressing Rachel. “There are few public performers who can equal you. It seems a pity that one with such consummate art as you possess should not have an opportunity to allow the world to enjoy your playing.”

“You are very kind ; but were I to set up for a public performer I should be obliged, like *Punch’s* young man and his necktie, to give my whole mind to it.”

“You have mind enough for a dozen things as exacting as that,” interposed Burton, who had never taken his eyes from Rachel since rejoining the main party.

“Do you think so ?” questioned Rachel, smiling maliciously. “I thought you denied any mental predominance to woman, except in the mere matter of the emotions. Do you think I could add up a column of figures correctly, or work out a simple sum in the ‘rule of three’ ?”

“The ‘rule of one’ is what woman should seek to understand,” said Burton, laughing. “If she studies that thoroughly she can govern the world.”

Then Rachel rose to go, a servant having just announced that her carriage was at the door. She went up-stairs to put on her wraps, and in the mean time Burton, thanking Mrs. Moultrie for the delightful evening he had passed—“the most delightful of his life”—bid them all “Good-night.” By this time Rachel had come down-stairs arrayed in her cloak, and with some-

thing light and flimsy over her head. Burton thought he had never seen her look so pretty, and after she had made her adieux he stopped Moultrie, who was about to escort her to her carriage, saying that he would do himself that honor. He walked by her side as they descended the steps to the sidewalk. Neither had as yet spoken a word. He opened the carriage door and assisted her to enter. "Good-night, Rachel," he said, in a low, but measured and feeling voice. For a moment there was no reply. Then from within came the words, clearly and composedly spoken, "Good-night, Mr. Burton!"

It seemed to him as though a dagger had pierced his heart. For an instant he stood as though petrified. Had he heard aright? Yes, there could be no doubt on that point. Then he closed the door very gently and turned away. The coachman drew up his reins, and the carriage drove rapidly up the street, while Rachel, covering her face with her hands, wept as though her heart would break. But only for a few moments. Opening the door, she called to the coachman:

"Drive back as quickly as possible to Mr. Moultrie's!" The man turned his horses, and in less than two minutes from the time of starting was back at the house. Rachel looked out of the window, but there was no one there. She opened the door and gazed up and down the street, but there was no one in sight save an old woman and a boy carrying a basket between them, and a young man of dilapidated appearance, who, seeing that she was looking for some person, approached the carriage.

"Were you a-wantin' some one, lady?" he said, standing somewhat unsteadily on his feet and staring in at the open door.

"Yes, a gentleman whom I left here a moment ago."

“I seen a gentleman go round the corner not two minutes since. Was he a tall gentleman with a plug hat and an overcoat?”

“Yes ; which way did he go?”

“Well, it’s worth a dollar, I guess, to tell,” said the man, “‘specially as you ’pears to be so mighty anxious.”

She took out her *porte-monnaie*, and was in the act of opening it, when the fellow seized it and dashed down the street as fast as his legs could carry him. Rachel gave a little shriek, and the coachman, looking round, saw the man running ; but there was no one to make pursuit, and in a moment or two he was out of sight.

“Go home !” she said to the coachman, throwing herself back in the carriage. “O Tom ! Tom !” she continued, as the vehicle rattled over the street, “I think I am the wickedest woman in the world, for I’ve broken your heart. I saw it in that last look of your eyes ; and I’ve broken my own, too. God help me for a wicked woman !”

The drive home was not a long one, but it was sufficiently lasting for Rachel in a measure to recover her composure and to make some attempt to account to herself for her eccentric behavior. When she went upstairs before leaving Moultrie’s she had fully resolved what form of “good-night” to address to her lover. The ardor he had shown, the evident infatuation that possessed him, his rapid, fervid way of approaching her heart, had united to produce an effect not unlike that which usually followed his efforts in other directions. It was this power to influence others that made him so valuable as a public speaker, and that had caused Bishop Crocker, as Theodora had told her, to remark, a night or two ago at a dinner-party, that if Burton were only in

orders he would make a better missionary to the heathen than any man he had ever known.

And not only had his manner and his sentiments toward her impressed her, as he had intended they should, but his own personality had exercised even more influence. It is not at all improbable that even if Burton had not fallen in love with her she would have fallen in love with him. Here was the strong man, handsome in face and figure, brave, honorable, tender, and every word and action showing that he was true. A little time and opportunity would have caused her, as she well knew, to yield her heart. Now, instead of having been taken by siege and by slow approaches, it had been captured by storm. The result was the same : it had been taken, she had fallen in love with him, and had thus reached in a couple of hours what, but for his momentum, would have been equally certain to have been attained, though perhaps not for several months. Yes, she would say " Good-night, Tom," and then he would be her accepted lover. Indeed, was he not already that ? Had she not by her conduct at the piano, when she had allowed him to hold her hand and address terms of endearment to her, committed herself beyond the point from which she could retreat with honor ? That also was true. She owed her present opportunity for reconsideration altogether to his generosity. She had already virtually accepted him, but he, in his magnanimity, and fearful that he had pushed her too hard, had given her another chance.

All this she thought before she left the drawing-room and on her way up the stairs until she reached the hall above. There a sudden revulsion took place, not in her feelings, but in her determination relative to the words

she was to speak to Burton at the carriage-door. The event was curious as showing how the most strongly-implemented intention can be changed with startling suddenness by a very slight cause. At the head of the stairs hung a painting by a celebrated artist representing a young woman who is about to leave her home in company with a handsome soldier, who is apparently a new acquaintance, belonging to a troop passing through the village. Through the open door leading to the street soldiers mounted and on foot are seen. The girl has a bundle in her hand ; she has evidently only a moment before hastily put on her bonnet and shawl, and she is looking, with a mild expression of regret on her face, into an adjoining room, where her father and mother are sitting.

Rachel stood and looked at the picture, unable at first to make out its meaning. The handsome young soldier has his arm around the girl's waist, and is apparently drawing her toward the open door, to the lintel of which his horse is hitched. It was not very clear to her what the artist had intended to depict. The scene might refer to one of several quite different events. She smiled as she studied it, being reminded of a portion of the frieze in the drawing-room she had just left, which was a copy of the Bayeux tapestry embroidered by Queen Matilda. One of the sections represented two men with things in their hands which might, by a powerful stretch of the imagination, be supposed to be meant for lighted torches, which they were holding against something else which was not like anything in "the heavens above, the earth beneath, or in the waters under the earth." The legend, however, "*Hic domus incenditur*," made the matter clear. She looked for a legend

here, and at last, on a little gilt slip of wood, almost hidden from sight in a depression of the frame, she discovered it. Bending over she read, "Lightly Won." The whole story sought to be told by the artist flashed in an instant across her mind. A passing trooper, one whom the girl had never seen before, had, after a few words of love-making, succeeded in gaining her love and inducing her to fly with him. Had she not herself been almost as willing as the girl in the picture? Had she not been just as lightly won? Where had been the maidenly reserve, the timidity, yes, even the indignation that she ought to have shown when this man had dared to speak to her of love after one evening's acquaintance? Had she not, in fact, acted in accordance with the principles that various masculine slanderers had attributed to those women that believed in the amplification of their rights? Yes, she had certainly behaved shamefully! She had allowed this man to take it for granted that all he had to do was to ask and to receive. Only to open his arms for her to fly into them and nestle in his bosom. Fortunately the matter was still within her control. He had himself, of his own free will, placed it there, and she had only to bid him good-night after a certain formula which he said would be a negative answer, and she would be free. As to his drowning himself, that, of course, was idle talk. Men did not, in these days, drown themselves for the love of women. If he really cared for her he would of course come back, and then all would go well. That she loved him she felt well assured. Her true heart had spoken when she had stood by the piano, the tears falling from her eyes on Burton's hand. That was the truth, and if so, what was this? Was it a lie that she was going to act? She did not stop to think, but the question she had last put to herself

somewhat unsettled her in her determination ; not enough, however, to cause her to change it. She was not to be "lightly won." The man who wanted her for his wife must woo her, and if he could win her she would be tender and true to him. On her way to the carriage she did not dare to speak a word to Burton lest something to change her purpose might grow out of her remark. She had heard his adieu, "Good-night, Rachel," and for an instant she had wavered ; but she had nerved herself for the effort, and with a voice without a tremor had said, "Good-night, Mr. Burton," as though she were addressing an acquaintance to whom she owed nothing more than civility.

But the effect of her words had been far different from what she had expected. The look of deep sorrow that in an instant overspread Burton's face told her that she had struck deep. If he had gotten angry and had shut the door with a bang, she would have felt that she had not done altogether wrong. But he had displayed an emotion of quite a different kind. Then instantly her repentance had come.

When she arrived at her home she spoke a few words to her mother, and then, on the plea of feeling tired, went to her own room. She was not long in concluding what to do. She would write to him, and humbling herself to the extent that might be necessary, confess her love and ask forgiveness for her fault. He might not come back to her. The insight into her character that the incident had given him might have sufficed to destroy forever the illusion she had created. Well, God help her if it should be so ! But she, at any rate, now that her senses had come back to her, must undo the wrong she had committed, for she felt that she had spoken a wicked lie.

CHAPTER XIV.

A DISAPPEARANCE.

MOULTRIE had succeeded so well in concealing the effect produced by the telegram he had received that neither Theodora nor Lalage suspected that it was any other than such as he was constantly getting from political friends in all parts of the country. But after the departure of their guests he took it from his pocket, and proceeded to read it to his wife and daughter.

“ You must prepare yourself for a disappointment, Lal,” he said, as he opened the envelope and spread the telegram out on the table before him. “ Tyscovus will not be in New York for some time to come yet. This is what he says, and I must confess that I don’t quite understand him :

“ ‘ ST. LOUIS, November 20, 1874.

“ ‘ TO GEOFFREY MOULTRIE, ESQ., NEW YORK :

“ ‘ Letters received. Will go to Washington in a few days without coming to New York. If there has been any misunderstanding on either side, you can then help me to correct it.

“ ‘ JOHN TYSCOVUS.’ ”

“ What can he mean ? ” said Lal, who, while her father was speaking and the telegram was being read, became as pale as a ghost. “ Not coming to New York,

and not one word for me ! There is something wrong—something of which we have no knowledge.”

“ Yes,” resumed Moultrie, “ that is very evident ; but what is it ? Did you write anything that could by any possibility admit of a false interpretation ? ”

“ Nothing. I wrote just as I have always written, and I said how glad we should all be to see him, and,” she added, a little color coming into her face as she spoke, “ that I should be gladdest of all.”

“ You wrote also, Geoffrey, did you not ? ” said Theodora. “ Do you remember what you said ? ”

“ Perfectly,” he answered. “ I spoke of the political change here, congratulated him on his election, and referred him to Lal’s letter for other information. I think that I said jokingly that she had sat up half the night writing it, and that her eyes that morning were, in consequence, not so bright as usual.”

“ It is very strange,” remarked Theodora, musingly. “ He is not a man to act from caprice or fancy. Some strong reason has caused him to change his mind. He spoke of misunderstandings. Evidently, whatever they are, they have been induced by the letters. We have, therefore, no very extensive field to investigate, and doubtless a few words with him will set everything right.”

“ But he is very wrong, mamma,” said Lal, “ to let anything—anything,” she repeated, with emphasis, “ cause him to treat me in this way. It is me he means, and it is because of something he thinks that I have done that he is not coming to New York. It is very wrong ! Oh, yes, very wrong, and it is he who must explain, not father or I ! ”

“ I think you are right, my dear child,” said Moul-

trie, feelingly. "We are conscious of no wrong-doing on our part. If we should discover that either of us has unwittingly said or done anything to wound our friend, it would be our duty to set things right ; but in the absence of such knowledge it is for us to be silent. There is a pride which all true men and women should possess, and I think we all have it."

"I can wait patiently, father, for the right to be brought out ; and in the mean time, while we think he has been unjust, we must not be too hard on him, for we do not know what has happened. If he is the man we think he is, why, then, in a little while he will tell us."

A series of furious rings at the front-door bell interrupted the conversation.

"It must be either a fireman or a policeman," said Moultrie, going into the hall. "Why, good Heavens, mother, what has happened?" he exclaimed, and in a moment he re-entered the room, holding the dowager by the hand.

In their surprise at this late and unexpected visit, Theodora and Lalage had risen to their feet, but in her agitation the elder lady did not appear to notice them, though she looked inquiringly around the room.

"Has Julia been here to-day?" she said, addressing the question to no one in particular, though at last her eyes settled on Moultrie.

"No," he answered, "I think not. I thought she was too much indisposed to be out."

"So I thought!" exclaimed the dowager. "But this afternoon she got up and announced that she was coming here to learn something about that lecture. She left the house at about four o'clock, and has not been seen since.

I went to her room a few minutes ago, and found this note addressed to me on the table. Read it."

She handed a note to her son, and he read as follows :

" ' DEAR MOTHER : Do not be alarmed about me. I have found it necessary to leave the city. I shall be quite safe, and you will soon hear more of me.

" ' Your affectionate daughter,
" ' JULIA. ' "

" Where in the name of Heaven can she have gone ?" said Moultrie, as the letter fell from his hands in his astonishment at its contents.

" I do not know," answered his mother. " There is only one thing that suggests itself, an idea that would occur to any one, I think, but that cannot be true. She has always been prudent and good. No, no, *that* cannot be true."

" No, mother," said Moultrie, gravely, " that is impossible. She may be foolish, she may even be wicked, but she would not disgrace herself. Is there no clew to where she has gone ?"

" No, none. I have thought the matter over, but can discover nothing. For the last two weeks she has not left her room till this afternoon."

" What did she take with her ?"

" A full supply of clothes and two large trunks. Her jewelry and other valuables she has left behind. Apparently she has taken only those things that a woman would require for use."

" Well, she must have had her trunks taken from the house by an expressman. It will, I think, be no difficult matter to find him, as well as the hackman who took her to a railway station or ferry."

“She left the house on foot ; but Richard tells me that an expressman whom he did not know came for her trunks this morning, and that she gave him directions where he was to take them. But she spoke in so low a tone that he did not hear, and as she went up-stairs she said something which he *did* hear about sending them to be repaired.”

“It is now ten o’clock,” said Moultrie, looking at his watch. “I shall go at once and have a talk with Malcolm, the detective, and put the matter into his hands. Depend upon it, we shall know in twenty-four hours who took the trunks away, where she has gone, and probably what has caused her to leave her home. Now, shall I take you home first, mother ?”

“I ran over with Richard, but I shall be very glad to have you see me home—unless, indeed, you should lose time. Oh, Geoffrey, what a horrid thing this is ! I am afraid our family has received a blow from which it will never recover, and then coming so soon after—after that other dreadful event.”

“What do you mean, mother ?” interrupted Moultrie. (They were out in the hall now, where he was putting on his overcoat.)

“Oh, I don’t wish to annoy you, Geoffrey, but of course you know that I have been very much distressed over that—shall I call it *escapade* of Theodora’s, which—”

“Stop, mother !” exclaimed Moultrie, in a tone of such severity that the dowager involuntarily started ; “you had better *not* say *escapade*, for if you did you would be insulting my wife, and that I should not allow you to do, even should you desire to attempt it. You have a perfect right to your own opinions relative to my wife’s conduct ; but if they are offensive, and you ven-

ture to inflict them on me, you will commit an error that I think you will regret."

"Forgive me, Geoffrey!" exclaimed his mother. "I don't know what I am saying. This last affair is so utterly shocking that it has, I think, driven me wild. I will never allude to the other matter again. Of course, it is not so bad as this, and after a while perhaps I may look at it quite differently. But to think that my daughter, my only daughter, should elope clandestinely from her mother's house is a terrible thing to me."

"She could not have gone off with any one?" said Moultrie, interrogatively, as they passed out of the street door.

"Gone off with any one! gone off with a man! Oh, Geoffrey, how can you suggest such a thing? Remember that she is your sister."

"True," he answered; "but my suggestion, as you are pleased to call it, is scarcely so bad as the one you made a few minutes ago."

"But then I am not responsible. I am out of my mind, while you are as cool as a cucumber—almost callous, I should say."

Moultrie made no reply to this charge, knowing full well that his mother if met at one point would bring forward another, and that the better plan, when her remarks related to him solely, was to treat them with silence. Besides, in his present frame of mind, he did not care to dispute or to argue over the trivial matters his mother was disposed to introduce. He therefore turned the conversation by inquiring whether or not Julia had shown by her manner that anything was engrossing her mind.

"No," answered the dowager. "Stop a moment!"

she continued, after an instant's reflection. "During the last two weeks she certainly has not been herself. She came back from your house on the day she fainted looking very much depressed, and at once took to her bed. You know she fainted in your library while Lalage was telling her some horrid story about her Polish ancestors. And before that, after you went out, she nearly lost consciousness over something else that Lalage said to her, or at least while talking with her."

"Yes, I know," said Moultrie, "and the two circumstances struck me as very peculiar. Julia is not so squeamish as to faint over a story of events that took place three hundred years ago, and that do not concern her in the least. Now, I have inquired about those fainting attacks, and I find that they both occurred while a letter was being discussed. They were probably induced by something that had a special application to her, and they may have, or the letter may have, something to do with her present disappearance. But here we are at your door. I will see you inside, and then I must hurry off to find Malcolm."

He left his mother in her own hall, and then, walking across to Sixth Avenue, jumped into a street railway car on his way down-town to Malcolm's office. He had employed the famous detective several times in business matters, and had every reason to be satisfied with his efficiency and honesty. He found him in his office, surrounded by papers, and intently engaged in scrutinizing the photograph of a woman and comparing it with a portrait on ivory, evidently of the same person, but taken when the subject was much younger. He laid aside his occupation, however, as soon as Moultrie

entered, and then gave full attention to the matter the latter had to disclose.

“When I come to you, Malcolm,” said Moultrie, “I come with the same predisposition I should have if I went to my physician, my lawyer, or my father-confessor, if I had one, and that is with the intention of telling him everything relating to the affair in regard to which I want his advice or assistance. I shall accordingly tell you all I know, and even my suspicions, and shall then answer any questions you may choose to put.” As briefly, therefore, as possible, he communicated to the detective all the facts that either directly or remotely related to Julia’s disappearance.

“Now,” he added, as he concluded, “it is very evident to me that in some way or other my sister’s flight is connected with the letter that I mailed that morning to a gentleman in St. Louis, and who is, or, as perhaps I should now say, was, engaged to be married to my daughter. My idea is, knowing her proclivity to play practical jokes on everybody she can reach, that she has tampered with that letter, and that, fearful of the exposure that she knew would come, and at about this time, and dreading my just anger, she has hidden herself somewhere till the storm she has created has blown over.”

“That seems quite likely,” said Malcolm, reflectively. “The only objection I see to accepting your view is, that if she went off solely on account of a practical joke she had played, she would have said so in the letter she left for her mother. It appears to me that we shall have to look deeper. Besides, why should she have fainted when Miss Moultrie read the letter to her out of the book, and told the history of it? By the way, sir, can I see that book?”

“Certainly ; you will have to call to-morrow morning to get a few data from my daughter, and then you can examine the volume.”

“I shall at once make inquiries of all the expressmen. I shall see the servant at your mother’s, and get a description of the horse and wagon that took off the trunks, as well as of the man, and I shall send to-night to the railway stations to ascertain, if possible, something about the baggage received to-day, and to what points checked. These ‘baggage-smashers,’ as they are called, are, according to my experience, a very observing set of men. Are the trunks, of which I think you said there were two, marked ?”

“I think so ; yes, I am quite sure they are. Each has her name on it, ‘Mrs. Julia Sincote, New York,’ and is covered with foreign baggage labels.”

“Thanks,” said Malcolm, making a note of the information. “I think I may safely promise you that with these data alone I shall be able to tell you to-morrow morning in what direction your sister has gone, and perhaps the exact place.” He rang a bell that stood on his desk, and instantly a man in plain clothes entered the room.

“Who are in the reading-room ?” asked the chief.

“Elder, Scott, Byers, and Tilghman.”

“Send Elder to me.”

The man disappeared, and almost instantly another man, presumably Elder, came into the apartment. He was of about the middle height, rather thin, but at the same time well put together, and holding himself as straight as a pine-tree. His hair and whiskers were just beginning to show the gray, but otherwise he exhibited no indication of being over forty years of age. His rep-

utation as a detective was very great, and he had, besides, on several occasions exhibited great pluck and determination.

“I am afraid, Mr. Moultrie,” said Malcolm, as he motioned Elder to a seat, “that we shall have to put my lieutenant here in possession of the main facts of the case; but I can promise you that they shall go no farther.”

Moultrie nodded assent, and the chief rapidly ran over the points of the matter to his subordinate. “Now,” he said, as he finished the recital, “take a cab and drive at once to the New York Central Railway station. There, as you know, you will find three railways centring. Before going, however, send Byers to the Desbrosses and Cortlandt Street ferries, to inquire of the baggage men of the Pennsylvania Railroad, and at the same time he can look after the Albany and Fall River boats. And Tilghman will do the same work for the Long Island Railroad. I think we shall get what we want by these means, unless she has taken some one of the ocean steamers. In that case we shall require a little more time. Stop, Elder!” he continued, as his subordinate was moving off to execute his orders. “Tell Scott to report in person to Mr. Moultrie at his residence to-morrow morning, at eight o’clock. Now go, and lose no time, please.”

As nothing more could be done before morning, Moultrie took his leave of Mr. Malcolm, and calling a cab, was driven to his own home.

It is not my intention to keep the reader in ignorance of the movements of Mrs. Sincote till the end of this history. On the contrary, I think it better that he or she, as the case may be, should be furnished with all the

information in my possession relative to her thoughts and actions which has any bearing upon the subjects with which she is connected. There are two reasons for this course, which appear to me to be of imperative force. In the first place, the reader, if a woman, already knows intuitively just where Mrs. Sincote has gone. If a man, though I should keep the fact till the end of the book, he would turn over the leaves till he found out all about it, and would thus interfere very materially with his enjoyment.

In the next place, I find that I can make a better story out of the point by telling it myself than by leaving it to be discovered by the detectives, though I shall make use of them in unravelling some of the details. Therefore, the reader is requested to forget for the present all the other characters, and to concentrate his or her attention on Moultrie's sister Julia.

The impression made upon her by the story that Lal had read was profound. There had been no shamming about the matter. When she heard that, notwithstanding all the machinations of the wicked aunt, the two lovers came to a good understanding and were married, she felt her brain whirl, a soft, ringing noise was in her ears, and then she knew nothing more till she found Lal and Theodora bending over her. The latter, through her medical knowledge, at once perceived that nothing serious was the matter. Julia had fainted, and in a short time, by the aid of a few simple remedies, consciousness was restored. After resting for an hour or so the carriage was brought round, and, accompanied by Theodora, she had been driven home. She had been at once removed to her apartment, and had not left it, so far as any one knew, till the morning of the day of her

flight, which, as the reader is aware, was that on which Theodora had given her lecture.

Arrived in her own room, she had endeavored to concentrate her mind on the situation she had created, and to determine something definite in regard to her future course. In the first place, she very readily perceived that if she allowed matters to go on in their own way, without any further interference from her, her treachery would inevitably be discovered sooner or later, and that the consequences to herself would be such as she could not bear to contemplate without a shudder. It would be too late then for her to take refuge in the plea that it was all a joke. She would receive the unmitigated scorn and contempt and anger of all concerned—her mother, her brother, niece, and sister-in-law—four persons of whom she felt in awe at all times, and of whom she might then feel in terror. She was weak, as we have seen, easily influenced by those with whom she was thrown into association, and utterly incapable of defending herself, even when, as, for instance, when her mother attacked her, her individual rights were interfered with.

But, like many other persons who are silent or submissive from lack of courage to face an aggressor, or one whom they have injured, she had her own ways of resistance and of getting out of any difficulties into which her conduct might have led her. Thus, although she appeared to yield to any arguments that might be addressed to her, or invectives to which she might be subjected, she often quietly pursued her own course exactly as she had predetermined. She therefore in this way exhibited an amount of tempered firmness, or pig-headed obstinacy, as the dowager called it, which was the source

of much mental disquietude to her mother, the more especially as she had no means at her command for overcoming it.

Again, when Julia had perpetrated one of her practical jokes she was in the habit of telling on herself, and thus disarming the resentment of which she had become the subject. With some people she, by this method, obtained a reputation for frankness and benevolence, which was, perhaps, not altogether deserved, for there were strong suspicions in the minds of others that she never did this till she was certain that exposure was inevitable, and that, therefore, there was a deal of worldly wisdom in her assumed repentance and expressed willingness to take any punishment that might be awarded her. It was scarcely in the human nature of the subjects of her pranks, especially the men, to be hard on a pretty woman who was ready to acknowledge her faults and so solicitous to obtain forgiveness. But the dowager was particularly severe on this trait of her daughter's, and she did not hesitate to declare, both to Julia herself and to other members of the family—for she never exposed the skeletons in her closets to outsiders—that for deep and cold-blooded duplicity and organized hypocrisy it cut her to the heart to be obliged, in the interests of truth, to admit that there was not a living person, man or woman, who could exceed her daughter Julia. Machiavelli, she declared, were he on the earth at this day, would find it to his interest to take lessons in double-dealing from her daughter Julia. And the ancient Romans, had she lived in their day, would have set her up as their two-faced god, instead of Janus.

But all this was certainly not merited, and was to be ascribed to that habit of fault-finding and spirit of exag-

generation into which the dowager had fallen. Julia was not, in the ordinary sense of the word, deceitful. She was sincere for the time being, but she changed so rapidly in her feelings that she did injustice to herself, and to some extent laid herself open to the charges that her mother brought against her. She was not a liar. Few persons told a less number of deliberate untruths than Julia, and she never told any malicious falsehoods at all. Indeed, up to the time of her tampering with Lal's letter, she would have scorned to perpetrate a dishonorable action, and the reader will doubtless call to mind the fact that she had not read a line of the letter that Lal had written to Tyscovus.

She had, now that she was shut off from the rest of her mother's household for the greater part of each day, ample opportunity to reflect upon the condition of affairs that she had brought about, and she perceived at once that quietism was out of the question. She must do something, or all would be lost. Two courses were open to her : to go at once to Lalage, confess her fault, undo the wrong to the extent of her ability, and ask forgiveness ; or, to persevere in the attempt to alienate the affections of Tyscovus from her niece, and to endeavor to secure them for herself.

For several days these alternatives were constantly present before her mind, and not even the morning and evening visits of her mother and daughter, which lasted each for half an hour, were sufficient to remove them from her contemplation. This mental condition was not unnoticed by the dowager, and many and deep were her cogitations relative to the depression and abstraction that appeared to have taken possession of her daughter. She knew very well that any direct attempt to discover the

cause would meet with inevitable defeat, and how to proceed indirectly and deviously she did not know. She had had several interviews with Lal relative to Julia's manner and behavior before and after the fainting, but the girl had been too unsuspecting to acquire any information of importance.

Meanwhile Julia reflected. According to the data she had received from Lal and Geoffrey, Tyscovus would arrive in St. Louis on the 20th, and after staying there two or three days, would depart for New York, at which city he would arrive on the 25th. It was now the 15th, and it required about two days for a letter to reach St. Louis. His address was the Planters' House.

Every day that she delayed the contemplated confession rendered the making of it not only more difficult, but also less likely to be accepted as an act of contrition. Already the 18th of the month had come, and she had allowed her friends to remain under the impression that all was right. In two more days Tyscovus would arrive at St. Louis, and would then receive the false letter. It was not at all improbable that he would at once perceive the deception practised upon him, for he must be quite familiar with the contents of the little book he had given to Lal. It was possible, however, that, not having seen it for over a year, he might have forgotten this particular letter, and that he would be specially liable not to recall it in its new form, mailed from New York, and its date changed from 1574 to 1874.

But whether he recognized it or not, that he would immediately take decided action of some kind she had no doubt. What that action would be she could not surmise ; but that the Moultries would at once receive some intimation from him was quite certain. They

were, however, very close in regard to the affairs of their own particular family circle, and events of importance frequently occurred to them without the dowager or herself being taken into their confidence. It might happen, therefore, that Tyscovus would telegraph demanding an explanation, or would at once come to New York to seek it in person ; in either of which events a crisis in her existence most unpleasant to contemplate would be reached.

Then, again, she was infatuated with her love for Tyscovus, and the more she contemplated the possibility of gaining him, the less disposed was she to retreat from the scheme upon which she had entered. During the whole term of her widowhood up to the time of her meeting with Tyscovus she had never shown that her heart was susceptible of another attack of the tender passion. She had mourned the proper time and with due sincerity, and on taking off her weeds had shown no disposition to plunge into unwonted gayeties or to contract another matrimonial alliance. But her acquaintance with Tyscovus, brief though it had been, had changed all that. She saw in him the one man that she had ever seen to whom she could unreservedly give her whole heart, and she had given it without at the time entertaining the slightest hope of ever getting his in return. Of her right to do this no one could deprive her, or, even had it been known, question its propriety. So long as she merely loved, she did no more than millions of honest men and women, with no thought of the realization of their hopes, had done with honor before her.

But now all was changed, and the feeling that animated her was altogether different from the calm and almost cold emotion that she had experienced for two

years and more past, and that was marked by so little passional disturbance that she had been able to contemplate the marriage of the man she loved to another woman with almost entire composure. She had rather enjoyed the mild suffering that the little thorn in the flesh produced. It was better than no feeling whatever, for it tended to keep him before her, and there may have been, as there so often is in these cases, a lingering, scarcely recognized glimmering of hope, that, after all, something might happen to bring him and herself together.

Everything appeared to force her to carry the matter through, and to incur additional risk in order to reap the possible reward of her unwonted boldness and deceit. She thought a little of the fate of the false aunt of three hundred years ago, and of the failures which had followed her machinations ; but by continued reflection she brought herself to the belief that the chances of a repetition of the calamities that had befallen that unhappy woman were infinitesimal. Probably she reasoned after the method of the midshipman, who came to the conclusion that the safest place for him to put his head during a battle was a hole made by a cannon-ball, as it was not at all likely that another shot would strike that place.

She therefore resolved that she would go on and take the consequences, whatever they might be. Having arrived at this conclusion, she felt a sense of repose that she had not experienced before for several days. Nothing is so wearing as doubt. The certainty of disaster is not so powerful a destroyer of mental peace as is the uncertainty whether there is going to be disaster or not.

But there was still work for her to do, and work that required all the skill she could muster. In two days

Tyscovus would be in St. Louis. She must communicate with him at once, and open the way to further intercourse. There was barely time for a letter to reach him in season to influence any action he might be disposed to take on receiving the fraudulent communication which Lal had unwittingly sent. What to write required thought, but at last she settled this point, and going to her desk, indited the following letter :

“ NO. 22 WEST —TH STREET, NEW YORK, }
November 18, 1874. }

“ DEAR MR. TYSCOVUS : I have just heard of the letter that my niece Lalage wrote to you on the 5th. There are many causes that have influenced her, and before you take definite action you ought to know their nature. Of course I am her friend and yours, and I would like to be instrumental not only in preventing further trouble, but in removing that which has already been produced. I have business that will call me to St. Louis in a day or two. If you would like to see me, telegraph me to that effect, and then I shall be glad to meet you at the Southern Hotel, where I shall stop. Do nothing rash. The letter was cruel, but Lalage is, I think, a good girl, and all may yet be well. Regard this communication as *strictly confidential*.

“ Your friend, JULIA SINCOTE.”

She read this letter over several times, but found nothing to alter. In fact, she was disposed to regard it as a model of discretion and astuteness. She appeared in it as the friend of both parties, with a leaning toward him, and as tendering just that amount of sympathy that would be apt to whet his appetite for more. To mail it

without risk of exposure was the next thing to do. It would be dangerous to trust it to any of the household servants, so she called a district telegraph messenger, and then, creeping down-stairs, received him at the door before he had time to ring, and giving him her letter to post, returned quickly to her own apartment.

During the next two days she waited anxiously for the telegram that she had requested might be sent her. She had told Richard that she expected one from a friend in Boston, but was on the watch herself ; for one of her windows commanded a view of the street between her residence and the telegraph office, and it was therefore possible, when she saw a blue-coated boy coming toward the house, to steal down to the door and receive the message without any one being the wiser.

At last, at about one o'clock in the afternoon of the 20th, she saw the anxiously-expected boy hurrying up the street in the direction of the house. Her mother had gone out to a lunch party, and all the servants were in other parts of the building. She was safe, therefore, in going to the door and taking the telegram from the boy's hands. Now, indeed, a crisis had come. She ran up-stairs to her room, and breathless with the exertion and the excitement, sank into a chair, grasping the telegram tightly in her hand, half afraid to open it lest she should receive a death-blow to her newly-awakened hopes. At last her trembling fingers were nerved for their work, and while her heart beat like a sledge-hammer, she ran her eyes over the lines. In an instant an expression of intense joy passed over her face, for she read :

“ I am overwhelmed. I wish to see you.

“ J. T.”

Her resolution to go to St. Louis was taken at once. She packed her trunks with such things as she thought would be absolutely necessary, and then again availing herself of the messenger service, had them sent to the Pennsylvania Railroad station at Desbrosses Street, intending to take the five-o'clock train for St. Louis. She then wrote the note to her mother, of the contents of which the reader is informed, and announcing to Richard that she was going to her brother's, and would not be home till after dinner, left the house. Within an hour afterward she was on her way to St. Louis.

The detective whom Mr. Malcolm had detailed to report to Moultrie on the morning following Julia's flight was prompt in his attendance. From him it was ascertained that the trunks had been checked to St. Louis, and that a lady answering to Julia's description had purchased a ticket for that city. The expressman had been found, and from him the statement was received that he had taken the trunks to the Desbrosses Street ferry, and had had them checked to St. Louis. All doubt, therefore, in regard to the direction she had taken was removed.

Of course the idea at once occurred to Moultrie that she had gone there for the purpose of meeting Tyscovus. Her motives, however, were not so easy to determine. He could not, indeed, consider the subject with that coolness that he usually gave to matters brought before his mind, for he had no data to bring to its solution beyond the mere fact of her flight. Still, he could not conceive that she would have taken a step of such importance, and, so far as he could perceive, one likely to lead to disgraceful consequences, without the approval and concurrence of Tyscovus. And yet he could not conceive why such a co-operation as this theory required

should have been effected. Julia had never, either by word or deed, exhibited any inclination toward her niece's *fiancé* not warranted by the fact of her relationship, and certainly no attachment could have existed on the part of Tyscovus ; for there had been no opportunity for the formation and growth of such a feeling. Altogether the affair was wrapped in mystery.

CHAPTER XV.

MR. SCOTT.

SCOTT, the detective sent by Malcolm to report to Moultrie, was the man generally selected for "inside work." In many respects he was a very superior person. He had received a "college education," had studied medicine for a while, and then law, all for the purpose, as he declared, of fitting himself to be a first-class detective; and it must be acknowledged that he had succeeded to such a degree that no one in this country could equal him. And Malcolm, who was an Englishman, and had been high in office in Scotland Yard, in London, before coming to this country, had frequently asserted that, familiar as he was with English and Continental detectives, he had never known one, either personally or by reputation, that possessed the ability, the tact, and the astuteness of Scott.

When Mr. Scott made his appearance at the Moultrie residence, the master of the house received him in the library. The information relative to the baggage was first given, and the conclusion was adopted by both that Mrs. Sincote had undoubtedly gone to St. Louis. At Scott's request Moultrie then went over minutely all the circumstances that seemed to connect her with Tyscovus, and the detective admitted that there did not appear to be any grounds for supposing that an attachment existed between them.

“Of course, sir,” said he, “we can’t speak so positively in regard to the lady as we can of the gentleman. As I understand the matter, he might have paid attentions to her from the very beginning, had he been so disposed; and since then he has neither seen her nor had any correspondence with her. Now, it stands to reason that there is no love on his side. And then, too, we must recollect that if there were, all he would have to do would be to say so. Men, especially such a one as he is from your account of him, would act above board, even when they were wrong, and certainly they would not enter upon a gratuitously systematic course of fraud when plain dealing would serve them as well, if not better.”

“Then you think there is an attachment on my sister’s part?”

“Oh, I don’t say that! I only say that there is more reason to suspect such an attachment on her side than on that of the gentleman. Naturally, if such a state of affairs existed, she would be compelled to keep it a secret; and if she at any time should take a notion to attempt to bring it to a satisfactory conclusion, she would be obliged to use underhand means. Women in such a supposititious situation are forced by the laws of society to work by strategy. They can’t speak out without incurring disgrace. Now, sir,” he continued, rising from his chair and pacing the floor in his interest in the task before him, “put yourself in the place of your sister, who, we’ll suppose for the moment, is in love with Mr. Tyscovus, having formed the attachment from the first moment of their acquaintance. She knows that he is going to marry her niece, with whom he is madly in love. Now, sir,” he repeated, “what is

the first thing she would endeavor to do? Remember that, as things stand, she has no chance."

"Obviously," answered Moultrie, after a moment's reflection, "the first thing to be done by an unscrupulous woman would be to break up the existing arrangements. But I do not think my sister is unscrupulous."

"Oh, sir," exclaimed the detective, with perhaps more feeling than the occasion required, "no one can answer for what a woman in love will do! Whether they live in palaces or in hovels, it is safe to act upon the presumption that many women when in love will do almost anything the occasion requires them to do in order to obtain love in return. And you can form no positive opinion from their ordinary behavior. I could tell you some stories of demure, well-behaved women, that, unless you were as well acquainted with human nature as I am sure you are, would make your hair stand on end."

"Yes, I know all that," said Moultrie; "but when such things come home to one, through a member of one's own family, it is difficult to accept them. However, I will try to disabuse my mind of all my preconceptions of my sister's character, and will admit, for the sake of getting a starting-point, that I may not have thoroughly comprehended her. Now, we have got so far as to concede that, under the supposititious circumstances you have mentioned, the first thing she would do would be to attempt to destroy the relations existing between Mr. Tyscovus and her niece."

"Yes, sir, that's so. And, next, may I ask how she would be likely to do this?"

"There is but one way, and that would be to cause a misunderstanding between the two."

“ True, sir. Now,” said the detective, very slowly, while he leaned against the mantelpiece and looked up at the ceiling, as though busily engaged in unravelling the complicated Byzantine pattern of the decoration—“ now, if there *were* such a misunderstanding, I should say that we had the whole matter settled, with the exception of finding out the means employed, and that would be a comparatively easy matter.”

“ There is a misunderstanding,” said Moultrie, going on to give the detective an account of the letter Lal had written and of the telegram sent by Tyscovus in answer. “ And twice when the letter has been under discussion my sister has become greatly agitated ; the second time to such an extent that she fainted.”

“ Then, sir, depend upon it, the misunderstanding has been caused by your sister, and she has gone to St. Louis to take advantage of the trouble she has produced. I would not speak so positively,” he added, seeing the pained expression on Moultrie’s face, “ but for the reason that I feel entirely convinced of the correctness of my opinion. Now, will you allow me the privilege of a few minutes’ conversation with Miss Moultrie ?”

“ Certainly !” said Moultrie. Then to the servant who answered the bell : “ Tell Miss Lalage to be kind enough to come here. This is my daughter, Mr. Scott,” he continued, as Lal entered the room and took a seat near her father. “ You can ask her any questions you please. Don’t be afraid, my dear,” he added, addressing her, and taking her hand in his. “ We are, I think, getting at the bottom of an affair that must be unravelled, no matter how much pain it may cause us all.”

“ Did anything happen the morning your letter was sent to Mr. Tyscovus that was worthy of attention ?”

said Scott, addressing her. "Any incident of any kind that was out of the usual order?"

"Yes," answered Lal, promptly. "A letter that I had copied out of a book and that I left on my table when I came down to breakfast was not there when I returned."

"You took the letter that you intended to send to Mr. Tyscovus down-stairs with you?"

"No; I left that on the table also. I came up to get it, and met Aunt Julia in the upper hall."

"Oh, you met your aunt in the upper hall! Had she been in your room?"

"No; she had been to look at a portrait of my father in my mother's room."

"But she might have been in your room."

"It is possible. But she said nothing about it."

"Will you be kind enough to let me see the letter of which you made a copy, and which copy was lost?"

"I will get it."

While Lal was out of the room Moultrie and the detective exchanged glances. But the expressions of the two men were very different; for while that on Moultrie's face was grave, almost sad, that on Scott's was one of exultation and triumph.

In a moment or two Lal returned with her vellum-bound book. "This is the letter," she said, indicating the place to the detective.

Scott took the book, and as he read an expression of the most complete astonishment spread over his countenance. Then he read it over again, studying every word. "Have you read this letter, Mr. Moultrie?" he said at last. "No?" as Moultrie shook his head. "Then read it. I think when you have done so you

will agree with me that if Miss Moultrie had desired to end the relation existing between her and Mr. Tyscovus she could not have written a letter that would more effectually have accomplished the object."

Moultrie read the letter with every evidence of amazement. "I think it is entirely clear," he said, "that she has taken the copy that was on the table, and has sent it to St. Louis—probably in the envelope that contained the right letter, substituting the false for the true. Do you recollect, my dear," addressing Lal, "whether or not you examined the contents of the envelope before you closed it? But, of course," he continued, "you did not; otherwise you would have detected the fraud."

"No," said Lal, "I am quite sure that I merely put your note to—to—" hesitatingly, "Mr. Tyscovus in the envelope, and that then I closed it and gave it to you to mail. But, oh, father, do you think there is not some other way to explain it all without thinking such horrible things of Aunt Julia?"

"No, my dear child, I am sorry to say that I see no escape from the conclusion we have reached. But," he added, turning to Scott, "I see the date of this is 1574, although the day of the month is the same as that of the day on which the letter was sent."

"Nothing easier than to change the 5 into an 8, and then she would have the exact date. Certainly it is a most extraordinary coincidence!"

"I recollect," said Lal, "that when I took my letter from the table there was an ink-spot on it which I did not put there."

"No, but which *she* did," remarked Scott, quietly. "She dropped it from the pen while changing the 5 into an 8. There's only one thing more, Mr. Moultrie, and

then I shall be prepared to advise you. Have you a photograph of Mrs. Sincote handy?"

"I don't know, but I think there must be one somewhere in the house. Lal, dear—"

"Oh, I have one, father! I'll get it."

She left the room, but was back almost immediately afterward with her photograph-album.

"Aunt Julia's photograph is here," she said; but as she opened the book a folded sheet of paper fell on the floor. She picked it up and unfolded it. "Oh, father," she exclaimed, bursting into tears, "it is my letter to John! He never got it! See, here it is!"

"This removes the last lingering uncertainty, Scott," said Moultrie, merely running his eyes over the letter, and then handing it back to Lal. "She is guilty beyond a doubt. Of course the fairest thing to do is the best. Mr. Tyscovus must be informed at once of the fraud that has been practised upon him. That is your advice, is it not?"

"Yes, sir; I think it is quite unnecessary to pursue the investigation further. The lady has been completely exposed, and there will be no difficulty in thwarting her schemes. I was about to advise you to telegraph all the particulars to the gentleman—your telegram will arrive several hours before she can get there—and to start at once for St. Louis, so as to meet your sister. She may get into trouble of some kind when she finds that all her plans have been defeated, and there is no telling—she might even attempt to—"

"Yes, yes, I understand. It were perhaps better that she should die, but not by her own hand," said Moultrie, bitterly. "I am much obliged to you," he continued, placing a check for a large amount in the detective's

hand. You have acted in this matter with great tact and kindness."

Mr. Scott took his departure, greatly elated with the success of his efforts and with the substantial recompense he had received. "If all affairs were as simple as that," he said to himself, as he entered his cab, "the detective business wouldn't require much head on a man. And if all the employers were as liberal as this one, we'd get rich sooner than we're likely to as things now are."

"Now, my dear child, let us go to breakfast," said Moultrie to Lal, "and then we will see, with your mother's advice, what can be done to untangle this sad affair."

"Not for me, father dear," exclaimed Lal, hiding her face in his breast, and fairly breaking down from the strained placidity she had hitherto maintained. "I do not think it can ever be again as it was before. No, no, never again!"

"Don't say that, dear," said Moultrie, soothingly. "We don't know what influences may have been brought to bear upon him, what misrepresentations may have been made to him. We should not, I think, be harsh with him till we have found out exactly how he has been acted upon, and what are his present feelings. If he has apparently had reason for his course we should be ready to make excuses for him."

"Oh, but that he should doubt me from any cause! That I cannot bear!" exclaimed Lal.

"It seems hard to you, but then you know what your heart is, whereas he can only judge of it by the evidence he has. You must try to put yourself in his place, and, moreover, to think how you would act in like circumstances. Here was a letter written in your hand-

writing, signed with your initial, dated with the very date that it ought to have had, and perhaps re-enforced by letters from that—that—false woman,” he added, with bitterness. “The case against you was strong—so strong, in fact, that I really do not see how he could have acted differently ; and yet he has done nothing violent. He has only held back till he could get further evidence. No, no, my darling ! If he has been honest, no one more than he will rejoice when the fraud is exposed. If he has been dishonest, then we will drop him out of our hearts forever, and even be glad that we have gotten rid of a weak and untrue man. Come ! We must not keep your mother waiting breakfast for us. You have behaved as I could have wished my daughter to behave—calmly, modestly, and with dignity. Now leave all the rest with me. When I tell you he is unworthy of your love, cast him out of your heart forever ; but till then be tolerant, remembering that, after all, he is but human, with all humanity’s weaknesses, and with perhaps fewer of them than most of us.”

He led her into the breakfast-room, where Theodora was anxiously expecting them, and to whom the facts, as elicited, were fully communicated. He did not spare his sister in his recital, but he had seen so much of human nature, and knew it so well, that he could make certain allowances even for her. And it scarcely needed his wife’s and daughter’s intercessions to cause him to resolve not to treat her with undue severity.

Theodora agreed with him that the proper course to pursue was the one upon which he had already resolved—that is, of informing Tyscovus by telegram of all that had been discovered, and proceeding to St. Louis at the earliest possible moment. He at once, therefore, sent a

long message to Tyscovus embodying all the facts of the case, and stating that he would be in St. Louis on the morning of the 23d. At ten o'clock he was on his way to that city.

The morning papers lay on the table in the library, but neither Theodora nor Lal felt much in the humor for reading them. The sense of Julia's treachery bore heavily upon them. The circumstances that had come to light were of such a character as to give them a new revelation of her personal traits and tendencies, and one altogether different from the idea of her that they had previously entertained. That she was weak they had known, but that she was capable of developing such a degree of strength in a wicked cause was what they found it difficult to believe. Moultrie had left with his wife the duty of putting his mother in possession of all that was known, and soon after breakfast Theodora walked over to the dowager's on her painful errand.

For some time Lal remained in the library, meditating over the remarkable events that had just been brought to light. Mrs. Bowdoin had sent word to say that, as her little daughter was very ill, she begged to be relieved of her duties for that day, so that Lal could indulge in her reflections undisturbed by thoughts of her studies. And, indeed, although she had managed to preserve for the greater part of the time an appearance of composure, her mind was so greatly disturbed by the knowledge that had come to her during the last twelve hours, that attention to lessons and studies would have been out of the question.

But although she had succeeded in preserving the appearance of calmness, she was suffering very acutely, and probably, but for the existence of a contradictory emo-

tion that kept the other in check, would have broken down completely. She found the strength that comes from contending feelings each struggling for the mastery, and in the few words she had addressed to her father on the subject she had given expression to the state of her mind in this respect. The grief that she experienced at the thought that the happiness she had looked forward to as the wife of Tyscovus was, in all probability, to be relegated to the limbo of unfulfilled expectations, was more than kept in subjection by the indignation that filled her mind when she thought that, without waiting for a word of explanation from her, he had assumed that she had done something disloyal to the bond that united them. This was conduct on his part so entirely at variance with all the conceptions she had formed of his character, that she began to feel the first glimmerings of a consciousness that she had made a mistake, than which nothing is more fatal to a continuation of love. She had formed these ideas altogether from the conviction that Tyscovus had had nothing as a basis for his action but the letter she had last sent him. In this she had been as tender as was her wont ; she had told him of the joy she was experiencing at his success in the election, and at the knowledge that she was to see him again in a few days after the letter would come into his hands ; and then had gone on to recall to his mind some of the incidents of their relations with each other, and notably that of parting on the butte, when, as she said, in her fervid language, she had felt as though her heart was being torn out of her bosom. That he should, on the reception of such a letter, have given up his expected visit to New York, and looked for mutual explanations with her father, were to her acts that could only be explained on

the hypothesis that his love was diminishing, even if it had not already entirely disappeared. She had always, even when in the degradation and darkness inseparable from a life with the Boslers, possessed a degree of pride and of ability to take care of herself that had sustained her in many trying situations. She had then possessed an impetuosity and violence of temper that had often caused her to break out into paroxysms of anger when indignities had been put upon her. A change in her circumstances and associations had, however, been productive of a great alteration in her emotional nature, as well as in other points of her mental organization. It cannot be said that she felt less, but the disturbance was extended over a longer period. It was with her very much as it is with a rainfall. The precipitation of an inch in half an hour causes a flood, while if the same quantity be distributed over a day it has all the appearance of a moderate fall ; and yet in both instances there is a like amount of water. She had acquired the power of self-control, without losing anything of her ability to feel.

But now, when she was told that her aunt had made a systematic attempt to alienate her lover's affections, and when she came to read over, as she did with great care, weighing each word, the letter of which a copy had been sent to Tyscovus as emanating from her, and as expressing her sentiments, she began to find excuses for him. The advice, too, which her father had given her came to her aid. She knew that he would advise nothing that was not intrinsically right, and that in telling her that under the apparent circumstances Tyscovus had done no more than was on the face of it reasonable, he was actuated not only by a regard for her happiness, but also for

that family pride that would not permit of a quiet submission to insult or neglect. She began the wholesome exercise of putting herself in his place, and endeavoring to determine how she would act under circumstances similar to those to which she was subjected. She read the letter over again, substituting in her mind herself for him, and *vice versa*, and when she had completed this operation the conclusion was inevitable that, had such a letter come from him to her, with all the marks of authenticity which hers to him possessed, she would have closed her heart against him, and never have opened it again for his entrance till he had satisfied her that she was the victim of a fraud.

And then she began to pity him. If he had really loved her, as she knew he had, how distressed beyond measure he must have been when a cold, cruel letter, such as was the one he received, came to him from the woman he was about to make his wife ! What a sudden reversal of his emotions there must have been when, expecting a letter full of love and tenderness, he had opened this false one, and read words there that could only have been penned by a heartless woman !

What was her duty ? Had she discharged it in full when she had resolved in her own mind to forgive him for the doubts of her fidelity that he had entertained ? True, her father had telegraphed him a frank and circumstantial account of the affair, but she had sent no message. Now that she had determined that Tyscovus was not to blame, she could scarcely be patient under the delay that must necessarily ensue before her father could arrive in St. Louis and communicate to her the result of his interview. She felt as though she ought to send him word that, now that the imposition that had been prac-

tised upon him and her had been discovered, she hoped that nothing existed to prevent his visit to New York ; but she reflected that this would scarcely be seemly. Two years ago she would not have hesitated, but now she perceived that the first advance should come from him to her. He knew already that she had done nothing wrong.

But perhaps nothing could have better shown the change that had come over Lal through her altered circumstances and associations than the feelings she entertained toward Julia. In the old days, under like treatment, she would have become greatly excited and angry, and in consequence would have indulged in violent language and actions ; but now she could regard the matter with a degree of equanimity that was astonishing even to herself. In fact, she could even find it in her heart to make excuses for her aunt's conduct, which showed, perhaps, that she was more actuated by feelings of charity and compassion than by those of retributive justice. In attempting to analyze the causes for this change in her mental characteristics, she came to the conclusion that it was mainly due to the fact that the offender was her father's sister, and that her love for him stood as a barrier against the exhibition of intemperate resentment. There had never been any great degree of intimacy between her and her aunt. The two were so dissimilar that there was very little in either one to attract the other ; and, in fact, Julia had her own reasons for having no great degree of love for her niece. She had never, therefore, held out any inducements toward an intimacy, and Lal, on her part, had never made any advances in that direction.

As Lal sat in the library revolving all these things in

her mind, the thought occurred to her that her aunt, if she had really loved Tyscovus from the first moment that she had seen him, must have suffered untold agony during all the time that she had been forced to conceal her passion. This served in a measure as one of the influences that caused her to moderate the just anger that she felt toward her treacherous relative. And then, when she came to reflect upon the pangs of remorse that the woman had experienced while the story of her prototype was being read from the little vellum-bound book, and that had culminated in the paroxysm of fainting; when she imagined the fears of detection with which Julia's heart must have been filled during the last three weeks; and when she thought of the shame that was yet in store for her, she was forced to acknowledge that the retribution would be ample, and that the cup of sorrow would be filled to repletion.

She was in the midst of her thoughts when Theodora returned from her visit to the dowager. The old lady had received the intelligence of her daughter's deception with her ordinary self-complacency, asserting that she had always known that Julia was utterly devoid of principle, and that she had suspected that some such course of systematic treachery was being carried out. Then she talked of "vipers in bosoms," and of "wolves in sheep's clothing," and of "whited sepulchres," and of many other similar unpleasant things, ending with the declaration that never, under any circumstances, should such "a snake in the grass" as her daughter Julia had shown herself to be again set foot in her house.

"I don't care so much for myself," she exclaimed, as Theodora was taking her leave, "for I have always known Julia to be just what she has shown herself to be ;

but there is her poor child, whom I have brought up to believe in her mother's truth and nobility of character. What am I to say to her now? How can I break to her the story of her mother's shame?"

"Oh," said Theodora, "I trust you will not find it necessary to say a word to Florence on the subject! She is too young to understand the matter, and surely no good could come from exposing a mother's weakness to her child!"

"There shall be no more temporizing with sin and crime if I can help it," said the dowager, with as much emphasis as she could put into the words. "There has been enough of that."

"But think of poor Florence's anguish in after years, when she gets old enough to form some conception of what has been done. If not for Julia's sake, mother, surely you will hesitate before you make the child unhappy. Promise me, I beg, that at any rate you will do nothing till Geoffrey returns. We have not yet heard Julia's side; and it is certainly unjust, even if circumstances are so strongly against her, to condemn her to her own child before she has had an opportunity to say a word in her defence."

"What can she say?" exclaimed the dowager. "In the name of Heaven, what can she say that will not make matters worse if she speaks the truth? Has she not gone to St. Louis to meet him? Lured on, probably, by his encouragement. Still, I am willing to wait till Geoffrey returns."

"And with that concession I was obliged to be satisfied," added Theodora, as she finished relating the incident to Lal, "and then I left her."

"She is very unjust," said Lal, "especially to hint

that John induced her to go to St. Louis. I am sure he did nothing of the kind."

"So am I, dear. She is a very singular woman. If any one were to abuse Julia she would at once fly to her defence. At any rate, she will refrain from any action till your father returns."

Theodora, observing the newspapers on the table still unfolded, began to experience a pardonable curiosity to learn what they said of her lecture. There were four: the *Avenger*, the *Controller*, the *Morning Sentinel*, and one with more of a bias toward literature than the others—the *Tattler*.

She opened them in the order in which they are here named.

The *Avenger* had a column devoted to the event, of which three fourths related to the history of the medical college and an attempt at a life of Theodora, another at that of her husband, a description of her personal appearance, and a list of the prominent persons present. The remaining fourth consisted of the first and last two or three paragraphs of the lecture, and of a criticism of about five lines, to the effect that the address "was a very creditable production, and was listened to with great attention by the large audience in attendance."

The *Controller* also gave a column to its consideration, but quoted much more copiously from the lecture than had the *Avenger*; and then, after praising the manner and style of the lecturer, and extolling her for the evident study she had given to the subject, went on to say, in a short editorial:

"The success of Mrs. Moultrie marks, we think, an era in the cause of woman's rights worth all the noisy tirades against the male part of creation in which certain

so-called advanced reformers are wont to indulge. The true way for woman to advance is to show, by her own efforts, that she is capable of advancing. No one doubts that in many respects the brain of woman may be superior to that of man. Let her show that it is. Hitherto she has not done this save in a few exceptional instances, which prove nothing. Mrs. Moultrie is another instance. Whether it is going to be exceptional or not, of course we cannot say. There is no reason, so far as we can determine, why it should be so. The arts and the sciences are open to her sex, and under her competent guidance, if women are really fit for such a study as that of physiology, other physiologists ought to be developed. At all events, we are free to say that we do not believe that there is a man in the country who could have delivered a more finished, graceful, and learned address upon a confessedly difficult subject than did Mrs. Moultrie at the "Martha Washington Medical College for Women" yesterday afternoon, and we may add that her generous recognition of the fact that, in entering upon the career of a professor in a medical college, she had not cut herself loose from her home and its head, gave her at once a place in the hearts of the people from which it would be difficult to displace her."

The *Morning Sentinel* was more elaborate in its report than either of the two other papers, giving nearly the whole lecture as it was delivered, and detailing several incidents of the occasion, notably the one of her salutation of her husband, which it spoke of as an act that took the audience by storm. It also called attention to the high intellectual character of the majority of the persons present, and dwelt at great length on the finished manner of speaking which Mrs. Moultrie exhibited. It also had an

editorial of nearly a column in length, headed "Woman in Science," in which it spoke of the field that was now open to the sex in nearly every part of the civilized world, and especially the science of medicine, for which there was reason for thinking that woman possessed peculiar qualifications in many of its departments.

"These views," it went on to say, "received ample confirmation, if any were needed, from an event fully reported in another part of to-day's *Sentinel* that occurred in this city yesterday. Of course there have been woman-lecturers before Mrs. Moultrie appeared upon the rostrum, but we doubt whether any before her, in this country at least—and it is here that probably the best examples are to be found—ever made so favorable an impression upon a specially intelligent audience as was made by her. She showed by every word that she uttered that she had studied her subject with the view of mastering it, and that she had succeeded in her object. And she also showed that she knew how to express her thoughts in language that not only conveyed the ideas that she had formed, but that did so in good English phrase which every one could understand.

"It has been charged against woman that she is not thorough, and that she is not competent for abstract thought. However true these assertions may be of the sex as a whole, they are certainly not fairly applicable to Mrs. Moultrie. When such men as Bishop Crocker, Mr. Carp, Professors Mattock, Wolverton, and Parsons, and Presidents Larmand and Black, who have devoted their whole lives to learning in some form or other, and who are necessarily trained students, applaud a discourse, it may fairly be assumed that they do so intelligently,

and that they are not actuated by an unhealthy sentimentality.

“And, in conclusion, we beg to remark further, that when a woman of Mrs. Moultrie’s social position, wealth, and youth accepts the chair of a professor in a medical college, knowing, as she must, that the act is one that the prejudices of her class will not be likely to approve, she gives an example of courage and of devotion to principle that we trust will not continue to be an isolated one. She has nothing to gain but the approval of her own sense of what is right and proper, and the gratitude of those who are striving for the recognition of a great principle.”

“How nice it is to be spoken of in that way,” said Lal. “But it’s no more than you deserve, I am sure.”

“Yes, it’s very pleasant.”

“And even those papers that were so unkind to father have praised your lecture.”

“They did not mean to be unkind to him. They opposed his politics, and they did not know exactly where their opposition should cease, or, knowing, did not care. But we have yet the *Tattler*. Praise from that source is scarcely to be expected.”

“And yet the editor is a woman.”

“Yes, I believe so; but I had the misfortune to offend her once unintentionally, or, rather, ignorantly, and she has never forgiven me.”

“How, mamma?”

“I was at a philharmonic concert, and right in front of me was, as I thought, a man, with a man’s overcoat, short hair, and a man’s hat. The individual was so seated that the hat prevented me seeing the stage, and I especially, of course, wished to observe the movements

of the leader. I therefore bent forward and said, in my blandest tones, 'Will you be kind enough, sir, to take off your hat?' To my astonishment, when the person turned round and faced me, I saw that I had made a mistake, and that I had spoken to a woman. The next day the *Tattler* contained a long article abusing my paper on 'Evolution,' which she had raked up from the *Journal of Physiological Science*, published over a year ago, and in which not only the paper was ridiculed, but I was personally attacked. I do not, therefore, look for any mercy from Miss Gildersleeve."

"No," said Lal, with indignation, "and you have not got it, either. Shall I read you what she says? She does not even mention your name, but every one will know that she means you."

"Yes, read it, dear; I am prepared for annihilation."

"While we are in favor of every legitimate means of opening the many avenues to wealth or distinction to women, we are opposed, in the interest of the sex, to all movements which tend to throw ridicule on the cause, no matter how seriously they may be undertaken. There has been heard much within the last few days of a "physiologist" who, at one great bound, has sprung from obscurity to eminence. We are not aware that this "physiologist" has pursued the study of the science in the laboratory of a Virchow, a Claude Bernard, a Schiff, or a Longet. On the contrary, inquiry shows that she has done nothing of the kind. She has probably taken in its grand principles by reading some school-book on the subject in the wilds of the Rocky Mountains, and has thus obtained, by a short and easy process, knowledge which the masters had taken years to acquire.

“ ‘ Yesterday afternoon this phenomenon culminated in a lecture. It is trite to say that a lecture may be so bad as to be delicious ; but unfortunately there are many such lectures. Seldom, however, do we have the opportunity of listening to one so delightfully, so inimitably bad as the one it was our misfortune to hear yesterday. One is bewildered to know where to begin in handling it, and therefore we must be excused from quoting any part of the learned “ physiologist’s ” lecture. It touched mainly upon the metamorphosis of tissues, and the “ physiologist ” kindly informed us that the world at large had very incorrect ideas on the subject. We are glad of this, for, of course, it is a satisfaction to be with the majority, and to know that it is not a disgrace to be ignorant of this abstruse subject. Of course the “ physiologist ” knows all about it, and hence it would never do for us to dispute about a subject well known to “ physiologists. ” ’ ”

Lal stopped. She was too indignant to go farther, for the rest was merely a mass of vituperation and attempts at wit, which, while they made Theodora laugh, excited quite different emotions in the woman less accustomed to the attrition of the world.

“ Now,” said Theodora, laughing heartily, “ I suppose I ought to consider myself well punished for mistaking the editor for a man.”

“ But how unfair,” exclaimed Lal, “ to abuse you in this manner, and, even as I see she does, make malicious allusions to your father and husband. She uses your lecture for the purpose of showing her spite. But what does she mean by putting physiologist in quotation marks every time she uses the word ? ”

“ Oh, that is for the purpose of conveying the idea

that I am a sham ; that, while I call myself a physiologist, I in reality am not one."

" Well, here goes for the *Tattler*," said Lal, picking the newspaper up from the table with the tongs and putting it into the fire, where it was quickly consumed ; " and if I had Miss Gildersleeve here I would box her ears."

" You'd get the worst of it, if you did," said Theodora, with a laugh, in which Lal joined. " She looks as if she could eat you up."

" Oh, you forget how I can fight ! It is a long time since I have had a good fight, and I feel as if I would like one now."

" You savage monster !" exclaimed Theodora, putting her arms around the girl's waist. " Do you know how much I love you ? Yes," she continued, " I do love you, Lal, very dearly, both for what you are and because you are my Geoffrey's child."

CHAPTER XVI.

REFLECTIONS.

To say that Burton was astonished at the rebuff he had received from Rachel would convey a very inadequate idea of the impression that had been produced upon him. He was overwhelmed with confusion, and for a moment stood, as it were, dazed under its influence. He had once been struck on the head by a sabre, in the hands of a strong cavalryman who was not very expert in the use of the weapon, that had only cut through his felt hat, and had had its impetus materially checked by a sponge moistened with water that rested on the top of his skull, put there as a preventive of sunstroke. The effects in both cases, so far as his sensations went, were very similar. For an instant he had seen thousands of bright flashes of light, then a tingling sensation had swept through his body, and his mind, at first confused, was in a moment apparently annihilated. Immediately afterward it seemed as though a mighty flood was seething and hissing and roaring in his ears, and then he had felt a dull, heavy pain. But there was a difference, for the blow of the sabre had caused a pain in his head, whereas the one Rachel had given him had produced a pang in his heart; so sharp that he had instinctively placed his hand over that organ, as though a strong pressure would give relief. All these sensations were over in a few seconds, and then he began to have a full

realization of what had happened, and to understand that his dream of happiness had suddenly come to an end. He had been tricked, deceived, jilted in the most cruel and heartless manner. Of that he had no doubt. She had led him on, had played a part for the purpose of making him ridiculous, and she had succeeded to an extent not flattering to his sense of self-esteem. Of that he had no doubt. It was as clear to him now as the noonday sun in a cloudless sky.

He thought of the East River, and of his speech about throwing himself into it, but only to make him see still more plainly what a fool he had made of himself. As to his threat, doubtless she would be rejoiced to read in the morning papers that he had carried it out. He had, however, not the slightest intention of doing anything of the kind. On the contrary, he buttoned his overcoat, rammed his hands down into its capacious pockets, and then turning away, walked rapidly down Fifth Avenue till he came to the Menhaden Club House, where he had two comfortable rooms on the fourth floor. Arriving at the building, he passed across the wide hall, not stopping to chat with several friends who greeted him, and entering the elevator, was soon lifted up to his apartments. Here he took off his evening coat and donned a more comfortable one of velvet ; his patent-leather shoes were replaced by slippers, which a young lady in Lutetia, whom he had defended in a lawsuit, and who had had no money with which to pay his fee, had worked for him, and turning up his lamp, he lit a cigar, and throwing himself into an arm-chair almost big enough for Daniel Lambert, settled himself down to the task of considering the situation and of extracting as much comfort from it as the circumstances would allow.

He found both parts of the problem rather difficult of solution. In the first place, he could not get a clear idea of the position of affairs, mainly because he had no knowledge of the motives by which Rachel had been actuated. That she had encouraged him to make advances was very certain ; that she had been pleased with them was not a matter of the least doubt in his mind. He was well up in the natural history of woman. He had studied the sex with much thoroughness from many standpoints, and had flattered himself that he understood all the manifold phases of the female character as well as any other person who made any pretence to a knowledge of the subject. He was in the habit of saying that although the mind of woman was the most mysterious and altogether most wonderful creation of Providence, yet that he had given seventeen of the best years of his life to its investigation, and that at last he had mastered it in all its ramifications and devious turnings and complicated twistings so thoroughly that there were no possible types that he could not understand after an hour's study. He had often been smitten before, and he had often had women in love with him ; but things had never yet gone so far with any other as they had now between him and Rachel Meadows. He had flirted and been flirted with, and this to such an extent in so many places throughout the country, that he had gotten a reputation for inconstancy, to which, in reality, he was not entitled. It was his manner to pay great attention to nice women with whom he might become acquainted, and to express his admiration for them to his friends in those exaggerated terms which he so generally employed in his conversation. But he meant nothing serious, and no one could say that he had ever wilfully deceived any

woman by trying to make her believe he was in love with her, when in reality he had entertained no feeling of greater depth than admiration. He may have flirted in a mild way, but he was not a jilt. He had begun by admiring Rachel, and he had ended by becoming desperately in love with her. It was a sincere, deep, and all-absorbing passion that he felt, and it was the first time that his heart had been seriously touched. He was a man of uncommonly sharp perceptive faculties ; he had observed her closely, and he would have sworn by all the gods and goddesses in all the systems of mythology that the world had ever known that she had reciprocated his love. He knew the difference between tears that came from an overcharged heart and those that flow at the will of the individual who uses them for the effect they may possibly produce on others ; and he knew that those that fell from Rachel's eyes upon his hand that covered hers were the genuine article, and not the crocodile variety. Tears, he knew, were tears all the world over, and if he had judged merely by their appearance to the eye, he might have been deceived ; but these were hot tears, which showed that they were produced by a real emotion, and he had seen the eyes whence they had come, and there was no mistaking their look. If she were not in earnest as she stood by the piano, tearful and speechless, and with it all, kind, then he would pack up and go back to Lutetia, and spend the rest of his days as a country lawyer, amid the unsophisticated maidens of his native State !

This point settled to his satisfaction, the Hon. Tom threw the stump of his burnt-out cigar into one of a pair of Japanese vases that stood on either side of the fire-place, and forthwith proceeded to help himself to an-

other from a curious-looking receptacle that stood on the table, and which appeared to be an attempt at combining in miniature the chief architectural characteristics of an Indian pagoda and those of the Capitol at Washington. Then he picked up the evening paper, and tried to master a portion of its contents ; but after making the attempt for about two minutes and a half, and getting no further than an examination of the column containing the stock quotations, he threw it down in disgust.

“ I’ll swear she loved me for five minutes at least ! ” he thought to himself. “ For that time she loved me hard—just as hard as she could, and that’s a good deal. Now, what in the devil changed her ? Or if she hasn’t changed, what in the name of Beelzebub and all his hierarchy made her play me such a damned scurvy trick as that ? There’s something wrong about a girl that can act in that way—yes, something wrong in the upper story. She’s on a par with the ‘ most noble Festus, ’ ” he added, after a pause, during which he appeared to be cogitating over the simile to be employed, and, as usual, when he quoted Scripture, getting it somewhat mixed. “ By George ! ” he continued, “ I believe I’ve got it at last. It’s all done to give me a lesson in ‘ woman’s rights ; ’ to teach me that I can’t always have things my own way ; to bring me on my knees as a beggar for her hand. Well, all I have to say is, that she has tried that game on the wrong man, and that she’s a different sort of a woman from what I took her to be—not worth the powder and shot to blow her to— Well, I won’t abuse her. She’s given me a pretty hard blow, I reckon, but it won’t kill me. I *did* love her, and would have loved her more if she had shown herself to be a true woman. Evidently she prefers her old associ-

ations with the woman's-rights people to becoming the wife of a man with a will of his own. Perhaps I was a little too fast with her ; but Heaven knows I'd have given her all the time she wanted if she had asked for it ! But, without a word, to shut the door in my face in that way, and with a devilish coolness that showed me she was acting a part—if I knuckle to such a woman, then I shall deserve to be called a milksop. I'll never go back to her. I'll never ask for a word of explanation, and if we ever meet again—which God forbid !—I'll be as much of a stranger to her as though she was the Queen of Sheba, or any other of Solomon's wives."

He rose from his chair after this emphatic declaration of his intentions, and walked up and down the floor for a few minutes. " Yes," he continued, and he repeated the assertion several times, " she's not the right sort of a woman." Then he stood in front of the mirror over the mantelpiece, and surveyed himself apparently with much satisfaction. " A true, tender, sympathizing woman," he said, still in front of the mirror—" and that's the only kind I want about me, good or bad looking is not a matter of much consequence, after all—would have been kinder about it if she had found out that she had mistaken her own feelings. And if she had wanted more time, how easy it would have been for her to say, ' Mr. Burton, I am not sure of my own heart. Give me a little more time. Let me see more of you. So far, I like you very much, but I want to love you with all my heart, and then some of these days when you are bidding me good-night, I'll say, " Good-night, Tom," and then you'll know that my heart is all yours !' If she had talked to me like that, I would have been ready to kiss the ground she walks on. But to call to me out of

the darkness of her carriage, in a light, ringing voice, as though there was a smile on her face, 'Good-night, Mr. Burton !' was savagely cruel. A Cheyenne squaw couldn't have behaved worse. It was unmannerly after what had passed between us ; after she had listened approvingly to my song, allowing me to call her ' my love ' and ' my dear,' and inviting her into my arms, and dropping tears like rain on my hand, and choking with feeling. Yes, it was just about the most atrocious piece of cruelty that has ever come to my knowledge, and I've seen some strong things from women in that way in my time. It was dishonorable, too. She got me into a trap, and then sprung it on me with a degree of inhumanity of which I could not have believed her capable ; but worse than that, with such treachery as does not go well with her pretty face, and that excites my contempt. Well, she did not kiss me—she would have done so, though, if we had been alone—but if she had I should feel as if a female Judas—I should say a Delilah—had pressed her lips to mine ! I'm done with her—done with her forever ! Hello !" he continued, as, on turning toward the table, he saw a letter lying there which had not been opened ; " what's this—' The Hon. Thomas Burton.' I wish people would not call me Thomas. My name's Tom. It never was Thomas, and it never shall be." He opened the letter, and then having read it through, laid it down, while a prolonged whistle escaped from his lips.

" Well, that beats the Jews !" he exclaimed, after reading it again. " Why, I hardly know the little wretch, and yet she invites me to dinner for to-morrow, and sends an invitation, or an ' invite,' as I suppose she would call it !" Again he read it, and this time aloud.

“ ‘Miss Billy Bremen presents her best compliments to the Hon. Thomas Burton, late Member of Congress from the State of Texas, and requests the honor of his company to dinner on Friday, November 21st, at six o’clock P.M., to meet several distinguished friends.

“ ‘And I do hope you will be able to come, for I want to thank you for your kindness in that difficult case you managed so well for me, and to perfect an acquaintance begun under such happy auspices.

“ ‘I am afraid I have been very naughty in taking up certain views about the woman question, and associating with a number of heartless women. I want you to set me right. I look upon you as the greatest man in the United States—yes, the very greatest, and your opinion will be final, so far as I am concerned.

“ ‘Yours sincerely,

“ ‘BILLY BREMEN.’

“ Well, of all the extraordinary epistles I ever received in my life that excels !” exclaimed Burton. “ The vulgar little huzzy, to dare to invite me to one of her feeds ! That comes from being a lawyer, and having to associate with such people. They think because you have taken their retainers, that you’ve become their servant. Well, I’ll teach her a lesson. The ugly, little, dumpy, flat-faced butcher ! Oh, Rachel, my beauty, if you had only stuck to me, how happy we should have been !”

He went to his desk, and wrote a note as follows :

“ MENHADEN CLUB, Thursday Evening.

“ Mr. Burton regrets that he will not be able to accept Miss Bremen’s polite invitation for Friday, November 21st.”

“ There ! there are at least two lies in that ; but I must not forget that I am a gentleman, and know how to lie like one.”

Then he rang the bell, and folding and closing his note, took up his pen to direct it. “ I suppose,” he said, “ her name is William about as much as mine is Thomas. I’d direct it to Miss William Bremen, only that my old father once gave me a lesson to the effect that a person was always to be addressed in like manner as he signed his name. ‘ If a fellow sign himself Mithagaunnah Napoleon Bonaparte Smith,’ said the old gentleman, ‘ it would be bad manners to address him as M. N. B. Smith ; remember that, Tom.’ And I have remembered it to this day. So ‘ Miss Billy Bremen ’ it must be.

“ By George !” he continued, after waiting several minutes for the bell to be answered, “ the service here is getting to be so devilish bad that I shall have to complain to the house committee.” He got up and gave the little knob a strong and long-continued push. Then he seemed to be in deep thought for a moment, and finally tore his note in two, and sitting down again at his desk, began another. Before he had half done there was a knock at his door. “ Come in !” he called. “ Well,” he continued, as a servant in the livery of the club made his appearance, “ I’m much obliged to you for deciding to come after you had reflected on the subject long enough to get all the *pros* and *cons* under consideration. I rang that bell twice.”

“ It only rang once, sir,” said the man, respectfully.

“ Then one of three things probably exists : I am laboring under a delusion, you are deaf or inattentive, or the electric apparatus is out of order. Now, please to wait

till I finish this note." It was almost as short as the other, but very different :

“ MENHADEN CLUB, Thursday Evening.

“ Mr. Burton accepts with pleasure Miss Billy Bremen's kind invitation to dinner on Friday the 21st inst., and will be delighted to be of service to her in any way in his power.”

“ In the matter of lies,” he thought, as he closed and directed this epistle, “ it beats the other. Give this to a messenger-boy, and tell him to take it at once,” he continued to the man. “ It's only eleven o'clock.”

The man took the note, bowed, and disappeared.

“ Yes, I'll go and see the fun. I want all the diversion I can get now, for this blow has struck me hard. Oh, Rachel, that one so fair should be so false ! How I did love her ! Yes, I love her still ! But I'd rather take a rattlesnake into my bosom than take her ; for the snake gives warning when it is about to strike, while she gives none.”

The next morning Burton when he awoke had an indistinct idea that something disastrous had happened to him, and in a moment the full conception of his misery flashed upon him. He went down to breakfast feeling more cast down in spirits than he could remember ever having felt before in his life. On the previous evening he had made extraordinary efforts to combat the effects of Rachel's treatment, and had succeeded in obtaining a temporary supremacy over the depressing emotions that were beginning to make themselves felt. But now the reaction had come, and he was forced to admit that his triumph of the night before was short-lived. He really

loved her yet, in spite of the lack of consideration she had shown for his feelings ; but he was proud to a fault, and he would rather live in single wretchedness all his days than take back into his heart a woman who had shown so little regard for the sanctity of his affection.

He thought, as he swallowed the bits of bread and bacon and cup of coffee, for which he had no appetite, that he would order his horse and take a ride through the Park, and as far up the river as Hastings, where he had a friend, Jack Wildlove, and his pretty wife, living in baronial splendor. He was about to give the necessary directions, when his mail was brought to him. There were several business letters, and among them one from a lecture association in Boston, inviting him to address it on the subject of "Texas before the Annexation," and offering him two hundred dollars and his expenses as a *quid pro quo*. Then there was another from the Secretary of State at Washington to the effect that it had become necessary to send a special envoy to Mexico to look after a matter of great importance, the nature of which would be told him in person, offering him the appointment, and requesting his presence at the capital at his earliest possible convenience.

"Well," he said, "the world has apparently awakened to the knowledge that I am something more than an ex-Member of Congress and a political stump-speaker. Just in time, too, to divert my mind from my troubles. Oh, Rachel, if you had only been true to me, you'd have been proud of your Tom ! I don't suppose her sweet face will ever fade out of my memory ; such a frank, honest face, and then to be so false."

"Hello ! here's another," he continued, as he picked up a letter that had been hidden under one of the others.

He cut it open with a table-knife. It took but a moment to read it, and then, looking very grave, he folded it up again without a word to himself, and with scarcely a thought, and put it into his pocket. This is what he read :

“ I was very wicked, and I am very wretched.

“ RACHEL.”

Burton gathered together his other letters, and rose from the table. “ I must get out into the open air and cool my head,” he said, as he put on his overcoat, gloves, and hat. “ She’s a sweet girl, after all. I suppose some sudden caprice seized her, and now she’s sorry. Poor Rachel, how you must have suffered ! There’s a pair of us, my dear. I have never been so miserable in all my life as during the last twelve hours.”

By this time he was out on the Avenue, and walking rapidly up-town. His idea was to go to the Park, seek some quiet place under the shadow of a rock or in the depths of the woods, and there consider the situation. On he went, with the gait of a free-born citizen of the great South-west, until he reached the street in which Rachel lived. He stopped at the corner. He could see the imposing façade of the “ Joan of Arc,” in which Rachel and her mother had their home. “ It is but a step to my arms,” he muttered beneath his breath, as he looked at the building. “ I’ve a great mind to go there at once, and settle the whole business on the spot. No,” he continued, as he resumed his walk, “ I was too quick last night. Now I’ll act after reflection. She fooled me once. How do I know that this isn’t another attempt to make me ridiculous ? ‘ A burned child dreads the fire.’ ”

He continued his reflections till he reached a deep ravine at the north end of the Park, where it was not at all likely that any one would interrupt him. He found a vacant bench, upon which he seated himself, and then taking out his cigar-case and selecting a "weed" with great deliberation, as though the fate of nations hung on the decision, he lighted it, and drawing Rachel's note from his pocket, he read it over again and again.

" 'I was very wicked,' " he said, quoting the note. " Well, an honest confession is good for the soul. I'm glad she looks on the matter from that standpoint. She wouldn't think it wicked if she had deliberately intended to cast me off, and now she's very wretched. Remorse has got hold of her—remorse, that corrodes the very vitals, breaks the heart, prompts to suicide, and causes insanity. Poor little woman! I'm sorry for her, just as sorry as I am for myself. Yes, and I love her as madly as I did last night, when I sang that song. I've sung that same song to pretty girls before, but never have I felt it as I did last night." He pressed the note to his lips. " Dear little woman! I'll make it all up soon, but I won't do so just yet. She behaved very badly, and remorse, no matter how deep, is not sufficient punishment. What a dainty little note it is!" He examined the paper very closely. " That looks as if it might be a tear," looking at the note sideways, and holding it up to the light, so as to see through it. " By George! I believe it is. She sheds them easily. There's only one here. There were a dozen on my hand last night. If she proved false after a dozen tears, what is she likely to prove after one tear? That's the way to put it. She's got to shed more than one before she gets hold of me again. Poor, dear Rachel! Cry on, my

love ! I could cry now myself. By the immortal shade of Sam Houston, I *am* crying !” He took out his spotless cambric handkerchief and wiped his eyes. “ I’ll make a martyr of myself, and hold back a while yet. It will be the better for both of us in the long run, and when we do make up, we’ll be as happy as Damon and Pythias, or Abelard and Heloise, or Jacob and the Rachel of old. He served seven years for her, I believe. Seven years ! Well, I won’t make it seven years, or seven months, either, but I’ll fight shy for seven days, and then I’ll go back and say, ‘ Rachel, I forgive you ! Come to my arms.’ Now, I’ll go home and answer her note. I’ll cut the office for to-day. I’m not in a frame of mind for legal matters.”

All the way home Burton was arranging in his mind what style of answer he should send to Rachel, which, while exhibiting the state of his feelings, would not go so far as to destroy any hope she might have of a favorable termination. He could not do this satisfactorily, he found, for no matter what form of reply he concocted, there were certain to arise objections to it, which were too weighty to be overcome. All his diplomatic tact would be required to indite a note that would accomplish the object he had in view, and do nothing more. He was in the midst of his cogitations, when, from around the corner he was approaching, came a lady that he thought he recognized, but that he could not at once identify. On she came toward him, walking with more of a duck-like gait than most women, and smiling and bobbing her head as she saw him. “ By Heavens, it’s the Billy girl !” exclaimed Burton. “ What a vulgar little beast it is !”

“ Good-morning, Mr. Burton,” said Miss Billy, as

Burton, taking off his hat, was passing by. "One moment, if you please. I was on my way to your office, for I wish to consult you on a legal matter of great importance. I'm so glad you're coming this evening. It's very kind of you, but I think you will not regret it. Now, about this matter."

"It is a legal maxim, Miss Bremen," said Burton, smiling grimly in the effort to look pleased, but wishing Miss Billy was at the devil, or some other equally remote place, "with the legal profession, that sidewalk opinions are worthless."

"You haven't given up law, have you?" exclaimed Miss Billy.

"No; but I shall be obliged to ask you to come to my office. It is my business to advise you to the best of my ability, but I can't do it here."

"Will you make an appointment with me now, Mr. Burton? The matter is one that can't wait, and I'll have to ask you, I guess, to make it for right away."

"At three o'clock, then, Miss Bremen," said Burton, taking a memorandum-book from his pocket and entering the engagement, "I shall hope to have the pleasure of seeing you, and in the mean time good-morning!" He took off his hat, and bowed, smiling at the same time as pleasantly as he could, and then trudged on down the Avenue to write his answer to Rachel.

Arrived at his room, he seated himself at his desk, and taking a sheet of his finest note-paper, stamped with his coat-of-arms in full emblazonry, began his reply.

"Mr. Burton has the honor to acknowledge the receipt of Miss Meadows's note, and regrets— Pshaw," he exclaimed, tearing the sheet in two, and throwing the pieces

into the waste-basket, "that won't do!" Then taking another sheet, he began again:

"I am as miserable as you, dear Rachel. I feel now as though I could never smile again. Your blow went to my heart; but I should be a monster if I did not take your honest note for all you intended to reveal. God—"

He stopped suddenly, and read over what he had written. "That's a good piece of writing," he said at last, "but it goes too far; makes me jump at the bait as though I were a hungry trout that hadn't seen a fly in a month. No, no, that won't do!" And the second note followed the fate of the first.

"What a disgusting voice that Bremen has!" he exclaimed, throwing down his pen, "so different from my Rachel's, for she is mine potentially, if not actually. One is like that of a poll-parrot with a cold in its head, and the other's like—like the sighing of the zephyr through a hedge of rose-bushes. Yes, that's it. I never heard a zephyr sigh through a hedge of rose-bushes, but I can imagine what it's like, and my Rachel's voice is just as soft, and low, and sweet, and as laden with perfume."

Another sheet of paper was brought into requisition, and a third attempt made to answer Rachel's note.

"Poor girl!" he said, reading over for, perhaps, the twentieth time what she had written him. "She wants me to come and see her. Doubtless she is sitting at home now wondering why I don't come, and telling her I forgive her, clasp her to my heart. My darling," kissing the note as he spoke, "there's nothing I'd like to do more than that very thing, but unfortunately I can't! You've put it out of my power just as much as

though you stood on one side of the Rocky Mountains and I on the other. Psychological reasons are stronger even than physical ones. My pride, Rachel, my devilish pride, stands between us. And then I'm afraid. I don't know you well enough yet. Woman's-rights women are different from the others. They're always on the lookout to bring a man down on his marrow-bones. So for the present, my dear, you'll have to sit. Not, I hope, so long as the 'Maid of Meurs,' nor with such continued fasting, nor with such unpleasant consequences.

“ ‘ This “ Maid of Meurs ” thirty and six years spent,
Fourteen of which she took no nourishment ;
Thus, pale and wan, she sits sad and alone,
A garden's all she loves to look upon.’ ”

“ You won't lose your beauty, and you'll love to look at me when you see me again. Now for the note.

“ ‘ I am wickeder than you, and twice as wretched. You have dealt me a blow from which I suffer. Time may, perhaps, heal the wound, but it bleeds yet. ”

“ ‘ T. ’ ”

He read this over aloud. “ Yes,” he said, “ Macchiavelli couldn't do it better. It shows how humble I am — wickeder ; how much more miserable than she ; recognizes the severity of the injury ; holds out hope or no hope in the future ; but it bleeds yet ; and therefore just at this present moment the wound is too fresh to admit of reconciliation.”

He folded the note, and directing it to “ Miss Rachel Meadows,” dropped it into the letter-box as he went out on his way to his office to keep his appointment with Miss Billy Bremen. It was now half-past two, and he

had barely time to get there in season. So he entered one of the hacks standing in front of the club house, and drove down-town, feeling that he had got over a difficult matter in a very satisfactory way, and that Rachel would still more reproach herself, and be still more anxious to see him when she read his note.

Then he thought a little of the coming interview with Miss Bremen, and would have been glad could he have found some way of escaping it. Law was, however, his profession, and it was a duty he owed himself to take all cases that were not tainted with dishonor. What the nature of Miss Bremen's business was he could not divine. Fortunately he would not have long to wait, for here he was at his office in the lower part of Broadway, at the door of which stood a private carriage, doubtless Miss Billy's. He looked at his watch. "Five minutes to three," he said. "She's in a hurry."

CHAPTER XVII.

MACHINATIONS.

“ You see I’m punctual, Mr. Burton,” exclaimed Miss Billy ; “ I’m *always* punctual. Pa used to tell me that a lady shouldn’t never keep a gentleman waiting.”

“ Your father was an excellent man of business I have no doubt, Miss Bremen,” said Burton, as he took off his overcoat. “ Has Mr. Jenkins called about those lands near San Antonio ?” he continued, addressing his clerk, who sat at a desk under the window.

“ Yes, sir ; he was here half an hour ago. He will call again at half-past three.”

“ Then, you see, Miss Bremen, that I have but half an hour at your service. Will you walk into the next room, please ? We shall be less apt to be disturbed.”

Into his private office the two went, and Burton handing her a chair, and seating himself at the table, awaited the opening of the consultation.

“ First, Mr. Burton,” said Billy, producing what was apparently a letter, “ allow me to hand you this. It contains a retaining fee,” saying which, she placed the envelope on the table.

“ Retaining fees have always a powerful influence over a lawyer, Miss Bremen,” said Burton, “ but I have made it a rule never to accept one till I have been informed of the nature of the case in which my services are required.”

"Quite right, Mr. Burton. You are the soul of honor, and so am I, too. We'll let it lie there, if you please, till I have stated my business, and you have determined whether or not you will help me."

To this Burton bowed assent, and Miss Billy continued :

"I have received what may be considered a very advantageous offer for my *abattoir* and all its appurtenances. I'm anxious to give up the business, and take my proper position in New York society, to which my wealth and, I may add, my education entitle me. The offer comes from a German gentleman in Texas named Morgenstern, who represents himself as a wealthy cattle-raiser and land-owner. I have his proposition here," producing a paper from somewhere in the folds of her gown. "Do you know such a man?"

Burton took the paper and glanced over it. "I know Mr. Henry Morgenstern very well," he said. "He is perfectly reliable. I see," he continued, "that he offers four hundred thousand dollars for the whole 'plant' and good-will. Of course, I cannot advise you whether or not to take that sum, because I do not know what the property and good-will are worth."

"It has never paid me less than twenty thousand a year, and last year it paid thirty thousand."

Burton took a pencil and paper, and made some figures.

"I should think that was a fair price, then," he said. "I perceive that he proposes to pay two hundred thousand dollars down, and the balance in two notes of equal amount, bearing interest at six per cent, and running, one six months, and the other twelve, and secured by a first mortgage on two hundred thousand acres of land in Texas. I know the land. The security is good."

“Then you advise me to accept?”

“Yes, if you wish to sell. If you have quite made up your mind to go out of business, you cannot do better than to accept Mr. Morgenstern’s proposition.”

“What do you think?” said Miss Billy, putting on a look that was meant to be confiding, but which in reality was almost anything anybody might have chosen to call it. “I am all alone, with no one to advise me, and I am so unsophisticated and trustful, and I have so much confidence in your judgment as my counsel and in your kindness as a friend, that I look to you for guidance. Do you think it proper for a young lady, with over a million dollars, to be carrying on business as a butcher?”

“It is an honest and a useful calling, Miss Bremen. If you like it, I see no reason why you should not stick to it as long as you live.”

“But I hate it. I liked it once, before I knew as much as I do now; but during the last couple of weeks I’ve begun to go into society. By nature and education I am very refined, Mr. Burton, and I see how much better a position I could take—one more in accordance with my tastes—if I were to go out of the business. Now,” she continued, rising and approaching him, till she stood by his side, with her fat, chubby hands, clothed in purple gloves, resting on the table, “won’t you advise me as a friend what to do?”

“As I understand the matter, Miss Bremen,” said Burton, “you came to consult me as a lawyer. In that capacity I am ready to advise you; but I have no right to do so as a friend.”

“Well, as a lawyer, then,” she said, going back to her chair.

“I see no objection to your giving up the business, especially as you do not like it.”

“Thanks! Then, that is settled. Now in regard to Mr. Morgenstern’s offer. You advise me to accept it?”

“Yes.”

“Then I will leave the papers with you, and you will prepare all the others that may be required?”

“Certainly, and will send them to you in a few days. I shall have, however, to send to Texas to see that the property is unencumbered.”

“I leave it all in your hands. Do what you think right; only get me out of it as soon as possible.”

“That is all, Miss Bremen?”

“No, there is another thing; but as you decline to consider yourself my friend, I am afraid to mention it; for it is a friend’s advice that I need now.”

Miss Billy’s voice was so imploring that Burton was inclined to relent. The idea of a woman, no matter who, being in distress was one that always moved him; and even one so unpleasant as she, speaking and looking pleadingly, appealed to his sympathies. Clearly it was his duty to help her if she needed his aid.

“I did not say I was not your friend, Miss Bremen,” he said, at last, “I only said I had no right to consider myself such. Pray, tell me what further I can do for you.”

“Now you are kind again,” she said, with a little giggle. “If you haven’t the right to be my friend, then no one has; for you have done so much for me.”

“And been well paid for it,” exclaimed Burton, laughing.

“The horrid money!” said Miss Billy, hypocritically.

“Is it always to stand between me and those whose friendship I desire?”

“I trust not. Now, I’ll drop the lawyer, and you will tell me how I can help you.”

“Oh, you are so kind, Mr. Burton, I can never, never forget your goodness to me! If I am rich, I’m only an orphan girl, and riches can’t take the place of friends. Well, to begin,” she continued, drawing her chair toward him, till she was near enough to admit of closer intimacy than that shown by words, should the occasion require, “When I was much younger than I am now, although I’m not twenty-two yet, I fell in with a lot of women who flattered me and gave me wrong notions of the position of woman in the world and of the crimes of man toward her. I became very enthusiastic in support of what I supposed were the rights of my sex, and very severe on man, who I thought was a monster of iniquity and tyranny. I done (Miss Billy occasionally fell into a grammatical error, though usually she spoke quite correctly) some very foolish things, I guess, and among them, and the very worst, was joining the ‘United Women of America.’ I gave them a good deal of money, and they made me an officer and a member of the executive committee; but for all that, I never quite liked them. They were so hard in their dispositions! Oh, so hard, whereas I am all tenderness and gentleness!”

Miss Billy put on one of her most languishing airs, and looked at Burton—who was twisting a piece of paper into all sorts of queer shapes—as though she would like to finish her autobiography with her head on his shoulder; but as he made no remark relative to her “change of heart,” she resumed:

“Yes, there were some pretty coarse-grained women

in that crowd, such as Miss Richardson and Miss Meadows. (At this name Burton started, and looked for the first time as though he took an interest in the discourse.) They both hate men, as if the whole male sex was made up of horrid demons in human shape, whose only object in life is to injure women. I've heard them both say that if they ever got the chance they would make men as ridiculous as they could, and break their hearts, as so many men have broken women's hearts."

While Miss Billy was speaking these latter words, Burton had kept his eyes full on her face ; but she had stood his gaze without flinching ; and though he did not believe all that she said, he thought there might be some foundation for it in the general fact that Rachel hated the male sex.

"It seems too horrible for you to believe, Mr. Burton, I know," continued Miss Billy, observing the interest excited in her listener ; "but just let me read you a paragraph or two from one of Miss Meadows's lectures. I've got it here in the *Tattler*, just as it was delivered less than a year ago."

She took a paper from her pocket, and proceeded to read as follows, Burton listening with all the attention of which he was capable :

"Ah ! why do women condescend to receive a degree of attention and respect from strangers different from that reciprocation of civility which the dictates of humanity and politeness of civilization authorize between man and man ? And why do they not discover, when in the noon of beauty's power, that they are treated like queens, only to be deluded by hollow respect, till they are led to resign, or not to assume their natural prerogatives ?

I lament that women are systematically degraded by receiving the trivial attentions which men think it manly to pay to the sex, when, in fact, they are insultingly supporting their own superiority. It is not condescension to bow to an inferior. So ludicrous, in fact, do their ceremonies appear to me, that I scarcely am able to govern my muscles when I see a man start with eager and serious solicitude to lift a handkerchief, or shut a door, when the *lady* could have done it herself, had she only moved a step or two.

“ ‘And love ! what diverting scenes would it produce ! Pantaloon’s tricks must yield to egregious folly. To see a mortal adorn an object with imaginary charms, and then fall down and worship the idol which he had himself set up, how ridiculous ! ’ ”

“ It strikes me,” said Burton, “ that while those are not exactly the sentiments I would like to have women of refinement possess, they do not precisely bear out what you affirm were Miss Meadows’s opinions.”

“ I’m not done yet ! ” exclaimed Miss Billy, casting her eyes down the column for another suitable quotation. “ Of course you couldn’t expect her to say in a public lecture that she was waiting for a chance to repay man’s insults to the sex ; for to do so would, by putting men on their guard, defeat her object. But here,” she continued, as she apparently found what she wanted ; “ what do you think of this ?

“ ‘ If a celebrated author had not already told us that there is nothing in nature so much to be wondered at as that we can wonder at all, it must appear to every one who has but a degree of understanding above that of the idiot, a matter of the greatest surprise to observe the universal prevalence of prejudice and custom in the

minds of the men. One might naturally expect to see those lordly creatures, as they modestly term themselves, everywhere jealous of the superiority, and watchful to maintain it. Instead of which, if we accept the tyrannical usurpation of authority they exert over us women, we shall find them industrious in nothing but courting the meanest servitude. Were their ambition laudable and just, it would be consistent in itself, and this consistency would render them alike imperious in every circumstance where authority is requisite and justifiable. And if their brutal strength of body entitled them to lord it over our nicer frame, the superiority of reason to passion might suffice to make them ashamed of submitting that reason to passion, prejudice, and groundless custom. If this haughty sex would have us believe they have a natural right of superiority over us, why don't they prove their charter from nature by making use of reason to subdue themselves? ”

Burton listened in astonishment. Such coarse sentiments to come from a delicate and refined woman, such as he had supposed Rachel to be, grieved him beyond measure. They were the ordinary stock-in-trade of the lower grades of the professional agitators for woman's rights. He had placed Rachel far above this class. Now he discovered that she was no better than the rest of them. He took the paper from Miss Billy's hands, and looked over the report of the lecture. Yes, there were the words, sure enough, and under the heading "Lecture by Miss Rachel Meadows, on the subject, 'Woman not Inferior to Man.' Stenographic report."

He handed it back without a word. His ideal had been desecrated. She had desecrated herself. Happily, it was all over between them.

“ Now, Mr. Burton,” said his visitor, elated over the impression that she perceived she had made, “ are you surprised that I, a girl not out of my teens, should have been influenced by association with such a woman ? I became, in fact, as bad—perhaps worse—for I have a heart, and when I feel I feel strongly ; but now, thank God ! the scales have fallen from my eyes.”

“ You are fortunate, Miss Bremen,” said Burton, with some bitterness, “ that they have fallen before any serious mischief has been done.”

“ Yes ; my heart is still sound to the core. Now, tell me, you who are so wise and generous, had I better leave them ?”

“ I can only say, Miss Bremen, that if I had a daughter I should not like her to have any associations with women promulgating such false sentiments as those you have just read.”

“ Thanks ! Oh, you are so good ! That is quite enough for me. Good-by, Mr. Burton, till this evening. You have taken a load off of my mind, and my resignation goes in this very day.”

She was gone, leaving Burton in a state of mind in which it would have been difficult to say whether disgust or elation predominated. The idea that a woman as pretty, graceful, well-born and well-educated as Rachel Meadows, whose modesty of deportment was probably assumed for the purpose of aiding in entrapping him, should have gone about the country parading such brazen-faced opinions as those he had just heard, before mixed audiences of men and women, was to his mind a shocking piece of indelicacy. The ideas themselves were immodest. They would have been bad enough coming from a woman doctor ; but from a girl pretending to refinement, one

setting herself up—as she apparently had to him—as fit to be the wife of a gentleman, they were simply horrible. Well, he was free, at any rate. His letter had left the door open to him if he should ever choose to go back, while it had closed it against her if he chose to keep it shut. It would do very well as it stood ; so good-by to Rachel Meadows !

Then he wrote accepting the invitation to lecture in Boston, and wrote to the Secretary of State, informing him that he would be in Washington in a day or two for conference on the Mexican matter.

“ That’s business enough for to-day,” he said to himself, as he went into the outer room. “ Mr. Roman, if Mr. Jenkins calls— Hello, there you are !” he continued, as the gentleman in question came forward. “ I was going for a ride ; but come in, and I’ll attend to your affair at once.” It was late when he left his office, and he had barely time to dress for Miss Billy Bremen’s dinner.

It was a long drive from the Menhaden Club to East Seventy-fifth Street, where Miss Billy Bremen lived, the sole monarch of all she surveyed, and it was not to Burton, under existing circumstances, a very agreeable one. He admitted the general truth of the allegations she had brought against Rachel, while he could not fail to perceive that the narrator was prejudiced and in the highest degree inimical to the woman he had loved. Besides, as is usual in similar cases, while he was glad he had been made acquainted with Rachel’s real character, he experienced a feeling of dislike for the woman who had placed her mental deformities before him. We like the treason, but we despise the traitor.

He had been very observant of Miss Billy’s language

and manner during her visit to his office. He saw that she was extremely anxious to ingratiate herself with him, both by praising herself and calling attention to her wealth, and by putting the flattery thick on him whenever an opportunity had offered. After her departure he had opened the envelope that she had left on the table, and that she had said contained his retaining fee, and had found a check for five thousand dollars. For a few minutes he had entertained grave doubts in regard to the propriety of accepting so large a sum, simply as a retainer ; but upon consideration he decided to pocket it, as probably every lawyer in the world would have done, for, as he reflected, it was, after all, only about one per cent of the sum involved in the transaction he was about to consummate, and there would be no small amount of trouble and responsibility connected with the business of effecting the transfer.

When he arrived at Miss Bremen's residence, and entered the gorgeous drawing-room in which his hostess was receiving her guests, it was exactly six o'clock, and several of the company had already arrived. She greeted him with a degree of effusiveness that was at once intended as flattery for him, and as a means of exaltation in the regard of the ladies and gentlemen present, who could not, she thought, fail to esteem her more highly when they found she was on such familiar terms with so great a man as the Hon. Tom Burton.

"It is so good of you, Mr. Burton," she said, holding out a hand which Burton touched very lightly, "to lay aside all your important business, and give us the inestimable privilege of your society. I see by this morning's papers that you are going soon to Mexico on a diplomatic mission of great importance. In honoring

such men as you, the country honors itself. Mr. Burton," she continued, with a wave of her hand toward a fat old lady, nearly as broad as she was long, and who wore a dress of blue velvet ornamented with artificial wheat, rye, oats, and Indian corn in bouquets stuck all over the front, "allow me to make you acquainted with Mrs. Willoughby Bull, of Cincinnati. She's a widow worth three millions," she continued, in a whisper; "owns thousands of acres of the richest land in the West, and kills half a million of hogs every year."

"I knowed a Burton onst," said Mrs. Bull, holding out a dropsical-looking hand, the fingers of which were covered with diamond rings, "but he wern't as handsome as you. He had a humped back, and one leg war shorter than t'other, and his hair war so all-fired red that the boys called him Rory Bory Allus. He was a deck-hand on the Prairie Belle, as run atween Peory and St. Louis. P'r'aps he wern't no kin o' yourn?"

"No, madam, I regret to say that in all probability I cannot claim relationship with the Aurora Borealis."

He passed on, still escorted by his hostess. "Allow me, Mr. Burton," repeated Miss Billy, "to make you acquainted with Miss Julia Augusta Fitzgerald, one of the aristocracy of Ireland," she whispered, "a descendant of Lord Edward Fitzgerald, who, as you know, was a younger son of the Duke of Leinster."

Burton bowed, and the lady bowed. He thought she was pretty, and he wondered where Miss Billy had gotten hold of the only woman in the room that looked like a lady.

"This, Mr. Burton," continued Miss Bremen, as they went round the room on the voyage of discovery, "is Mr. John Clodd, the eminent poet."

“How do you do, Mr. Burton!” exclaimed Mr. Clodd, grasping Burton’s hand, and shaking it as though it were a pump-handle. “I’ve often heard you speak. Never heard your equal, sir. You can move the masses in a way that no other speaker can move them. A natural born orator—*Orator nascitur non fit*. Ha! ha! You see I haven’t forgotten my Latin.”

“I have read some of your verses, Mr. Clodd,” said Burton, “and am glad to meet you.”

“I’m engaged on an epic now. They say the day for epics has passed. I’ll show them whether it is or not. I’ve taken as my subject ‘The Building of the Niagara Suspension Bridge,’ and I begin with the conception of the idea in Roebling’s brain—‘His seething, bubbling, whirling brain,’ as I call it, and then on through the digging of the iron ore, the making of the wire—‘Long drawn out to strands of ductile strength,’ to the completion of the great structure. Twelve cantos.”

Burton was about to say something when two ladies entered the room, and Miss Billy rushed forward, dragging him with her, to greet them.

“Oh, I’m *so* glad you’re come; I was in hopes you’d come early, so as I could have had a little chat with you,” she gushed out, kissing the two new-comers, and then shaking both hands of each. “Mr. Burton,” she went on, scarcely stopping to take breath, “allow me to present you to my friend, Miss Sorby, and to my other friend, Miss Boggs.”

Burton bowed to each of the ladies. He had met them in society, and had exchanged words with them, without having more than a speaking acquaintance.

“I don’t know whether to speak to Mr. Burton or not,” said Miss Sorby, with a smile of delight on her

face which belied her expressed intention. "He's promised ever so many times to call, and he's never done so yet. However, I'll forgive you, if you'll promise to be a good boy, and never do so any more."

"I go so little into society, Miss Sorby, and I am so much out of the city—"

"Oh, yes; a poor excuse is better than none. But didn't I see you at Mrs. Moultrie's lecture yesterday? Of course I did."

"Ah! but they are very old friends, and very dear ones."

"And I am neither. Very well, sir! However, perhaps I may find greater favor in your sight on further acquaintance."

And with a wave of her hand, as though she were drinking a toast, Miss Sorby turned away to speak to Mr. Clodd, who had just approached her.

"There are only two more to come," said Miss Billy, who held on to him as though under the apprehension that if she once let him go she would never be able to recover him again, "and then we shall be of the number of the muses. Those are two very nice young ladies. Don't you think so? I haven't known them long, but I'm very fond of them. They're going to introduce me into society. You'll take me into dinner—that is, if you've no objection."

Burton expressed his pleasure at the arrangement, as politeness required.

"I've invited the other two we're waiting for not because they're anybodies, but because one can sing, and the other's a great wit. I thought they'd add to the enjoyment of the evening. Oh, here they are; they're brothers—twins, I believe."

Miss Billy stepped forward to greet the two gentlemen, and then, immediately turning to Burton, introduced them as the Messrs. Schmidtlapp, of Hoboken.

“And now excuse me one moment till I arrange my guests, and then we’ll go into dinner.”

Miss Billy having assorted her friends to her satisfaction, and started them on their way to the dining-room, followed leaning heavily on Burton’s arm, as though it were the only support she had in her journey over the carpet. “I’ve been taking a few lessons in giving dinners from Miss Sorby,” she said. “She told me how to do things, and what to get ; but if I make any mistakes, don’t laugh at me, please ; I’m so sensitive ! It’s all cooked at Delmonico’s. If you want anything, ask the waiters for it. They only speak French. Of course you speak French ?” interrogatively. “I speak it as well as I do English” (which she did), “for, you see, pa was very careful about my education.”

Burton was glad to find that Miss Fitzgerald was on his right.

“By the by, Mr. Burton,” said Schmidtlapp the wit, the moment the party was seated, “I suppose you’ve been in Hoboken ?”

“No,” answered Burton, “I have never had the pleasure.”

“You haven’t missed much. I and my brother were born there. We’re twins. We’re generally regarded as the only two people ever born in the place and staying there after they grew up. Every one else has come there. Our father and mother came there. So, you see, we are within one of it, anyhow ; and every other person, as soon as they reach manhood or womanhood, goes away. There’s something so melancholy in the

idea of being born in Hoboken, that as soon as the brain gets sufficiently developed to comprehend it they move off. Ha ! ha !” he continued, laughing boisterously. “ I see what you are going to say. Very good ! Very good ! You were going to observe that the only reason we had stayed was that our brains were not sufficiently developed yet to grasp that idea.”

“ Oh, no,” replied Burton, seriously ; “ on so short an acquaintance I should not presume so far as to take such a liberty.”

“ Don’t mind Fred, Mr. Burton,” said Schmidtlapp the singer. “ He’s in the habit of saying funny things, and pretending to think that others were about to say them. It gives him a chance, don’t you see, to laugh at his own jokes.”

“ Now, Jake, if you don’t mind what you’re about, I’ll tell that story on you that Prince Bismarck told the American minister the last time you dined with him. I understand, Miss Fitzgerald,” continued this awful man, while Burton looked at him with astonishment mingled with anger, “ that you’re a descendant of Lord Edward Fitzgerald, who fought so gallantly, and who renounced his title because he considered himself no better than other people, and who died in prison ?”

“ I see you know all about him, sir,” said Miss Fitzgerald, with a little *hauteur*. “ It is scarcely necessary for me to enlighten you further.”

“ Oh,” exclaimed Jake, “ he found out you were coming, so he hunted you up in the ‘ Biographical Dictionary !’ He’s a keen one, is Jakey.”

“ Well, Miss Fitzgerald,” resumed Fred the wit, “ as I was saying, Jakey was invited to dine with Prince Bismarck the last time he was in Berlin. It was a swell

dinner, I tell you, and Jake felt scared at the sight of so many great people. But the Prince put him on his right, and soon made him feel at home. Now, you see, Jakey's one of those fellows that if you give them an inch they want an ell, so he launched out into a sort of a criticism on the German government, comparing it with that of this country. All the princes and counts and generals at the table looked horrified ; but Prince Bismarck smiled, and Jakey went on till he got through. Then the Prince began by laying his hand on Jakey's arm in the most friendly manner possible, and with a sweet, heavenly smile on his face, said :

“ ‘ There was once a Russian wit, Mr. Schmidtlapp, who compared the reign of the Emperor Paul with that of his mother. The Czar appreciated a good joke as much as any one in his dominions. He read over the witty verses that the funny gentleman wrote, and then had him seized, ordered his tongue to be cut out, and sent him to Alaska to exercise his jocose powers on the savages.’ Then the Prince, while poor Jakey felt as though he could go right down to the centre of the earth, and all the other guests were silent, beckoned a footman to him. The man left the room, and in a few minutes returned with six soldiers. ‘ Take that man out,’ said the Prince, ‘ and set him down in the middle of the street.’ Well, would you believe it, they seized Jake and carried him down-stairs and dumped him in the mud, and left him there, and a policeman coming along at that moment thought he was drunk, and took him to the guard-house, where he was kept twenty four hours, and fined fifty dollars for disorderly conduct. Bismarck never tells that story without laughing, and he always asks Americans if they know Jake Schmidtlapp of Hoboken.”

Every one laughed, but it was very evident there was going to be no general conversation except that excited and kept going by the brothers Schmidtlapp. Miss Fitzgerald laughed with the rest, but she turned to Burton.

“Don’t you think,” she said, “that you could take Prince Bismarck’s place for this evening, and serve that man as his brother was served?”

“Nothing would give me greater pleasure,” answered Burton. “If you will kindly get our hostess to give her consent, I think I’ll try.”

“Oh, Miss Bremen!” said the other irrepressible, “did you ever hear the story of Fred and the President? No, I’m sure you have not. Fred was in Washington last week, and as soon as the President heard of his arrival, he sent an officer of the army to call on him and to invite him to a State dinner at the White House on the following evening. Fred accepted, and when the time came he went, dressed out fit to kill, with a diamond stud worth two thousand dollars in his shirt front. Fred thinks he’s a wit. At any rate, he began to crack his jokes right and left, not even sparing the President. At last, in an unlucky moment, Fred said that he could guess in five minutes any conundrum that could be given. The President said he could give one that Fred couldn’t guess in that time, and Fred said that if he didn’t he wanted to be considered a first-class idiot. So all the company — cabinet ministers, supreme court judges, senators, and diplomatists — took out their watches. There were just twenty-eight watches lying on the table. Then the President started: ‘What’s the difference,’ said he, ‘between a piece of roast beef and a fortification?’

“Fred threw back his head, and began to think, but

for the life of him he couldn't give the first guess. He thought and he thought, and the perspiration stood out on his forehead in big drops; but the more he tried the more he couldn't. Three minutes went; four minutes. All were silently looking at their watches. 'Time's up,' said the President. 'Now, gentlemen,' he went on, 'Mr. Schmidtlapp is, by his own admission, a first-class idiot, and I think you will agree, after I have explained, that he is correct in his estimation of himself. So,' he continued, turning to the chapfallen Fred, 'you don't know the difference between a piece of roast beef and a fortification. Well, I'll tell you. A piece of roast beef is a portion of the flesh of the ox that has been subjected to the action of heat for the purpose of coagulating the albumen, and rendering it more palatable and digestible. A fortification is a structure built of stone or earth, or both combined, placed at the entrance of a harbor, or near some other place, to be defended with men, guns, and ammunition. I'm sorry you are so ignorant, Mr. Schmidtlapp.'

"A roar of laughter followed, and poor Fred never opened his mouth again that evening. The next day he called at the White House, but the President returned his card, with an indorsement to the effect that he recommended Mr. Schmidtlapp to go to the lunatic asylum over the river." Again every one laughed, but the two irrepressibles had evidently made up their minds to play into each other's hands by a series of reciprocal jokes. The poet Clodd looked the picture of despair. Old Mrs. Willoughby Bull had not had an opportunity to open her mouth except to put something into it, and neither Miss Sorby nor Miss Boggs had received any special attention. Burton was well enough satisfied. It

saved him the necessity of exerting himself to entertain any one, for he was not in the humor for the effort. It was very apparent, however, that such an entire absorption of the attention as was being effected by the witty and musical Schmidtlapps could not go on all the evening without causing Miss Billy's dinner party to result in a miserable failure. For however much people wish to be amused, there is no such amusement as that which the two irrepressibles were enjoying—that of hearing one's self talk and of amusing others. The oysters, the soup, the fish, had come and gone, and still the brothers held their sway. But their downfall was approaching.

CHAPTER XVIII.

A TERRIBLE WOMAN.

THE fates had decreed that Mrs. Willoughby Bull should cause it, and she was equal to the duty that had been imposed upon her. Between the two monopolists every one at the table had had a story told to him or her except Mrs. Bull. It was her turn next, and the telling of it fell to "Jakey," the singer.

The last half dozen anecdotes had fallen rather flat. The brothers had made the sad mistake, which many *raconteurs* have made before them, of telling their best stories first; and it was therefore anticipated that "Jakey" would not even produce a ripple of laughter as the result of his next venture. As a matter of fact, he did not. After calling Mrs. Bull's attention to the circumstance that Fred had very black hair, he related a long anecdote of so stupid a character and so utterly without point that not a face expanded. But all at once a series of cachinnations broke upon their ears. Mrs. Willoughby Bull was laughing in the most astonishing manner. The sounds she emitted were not unlike those produced by an old rooster whose larynx, from long usage, has become roughened, and is then no longer competent to emit clear notes; and yet, between each crow, if it may so be called, and though her face was as red as a beet, and she was holding her sides as though to keep herself from falling to pieces, she was making strenuous

efforts to speak, which were so far successful that, by paying close attention, a connected story could be made out. To depict by words the sounds that represented her mirth would be impossible. I shall be obliged to leave spaces for them, which the reader can fill with any exclamations, such as “cock-a-doodle-doo!” “Ha! ha! ha!” “Ho! ho! ho!” “Hu! hu! hu!” that he or she may imagine would best convey an idea of their extraordinary character. The task passes my ability.

“I guess I’ll die right now—” said and laughed the lady. “It’s a’most killed me— So funny! Jist the funniest thing—I ever heered in—my life. Oh, Lord! Will somebody—slap—slap me—on the back?”

“My dear Mrs. Bull,” exclaimed Miss Billy, rushing toward the convulsed lady, while the peals continued, “will you have the hartshorn? Here,” she continued, taking a decanter of brandy from a *liqueur*-stand on a table near by, and emptying half the contents on a napkin, which she held to her guest’s nose—“here, smell this!”

“It’s no use— When I gits one o’ these—’ere—spells—it’s bound to last—five hours— If you’d slap me—on the back—it mought do—some good. You see, you—folks has bin—laughing all—the evenin’, and mine’s—come all to onst—”

By this time all the guests had risen, and were either crowding around the sufferer—for such she seemed to be—or standing in different parts of the room, anxious though helpless spectators. Burton proposed to go for a doctor, but this the old lady would not hear of.

“No doctors for—me, thank you— Medicine don’t do me no good— Oh, the very sight—of ’em—makes me worse— I jist think they’re the funniest fellows—

as ever I see in my—life. I'm like—the old nigger—as was kickin'—his shins agin a stump—till they was bleedin'—and a gentleman—as seen him—says—says he, 'What air you a-kick—in' your shins for—you darned old fool?'— 'Well, you see, mars'—says the old nigger, 'it—feels so good—when I leaves off—' Oh, Lord"—and all the rest of the company, except the two brothers, laughed loud and long over this story—"I guess you'll all get it too—but it feels so good now as they've left off—that I guess—I'll run through—my five hours—especially—as every time I lays eyes—on 'em, I gits a fresh turn— Oh, Lord—'

What was to be done? Five hours! She was too fat and heavy to be carried up-stairs and laid on a bed, and she declared that any attempt to move her always made her worse. Miss Billy was in despair; Miss Fitzgerald, Miss Sorby, and Miss Boggs were trying to comfort her; the poet sat helpless on a distant chair, running his hands through his long hair; Burton had tried to induce the laughing lady to drink a glass of wine, but she declared it always made her worse. What was to be done? Finally, Miss Billy, leaving Miss Boggs to keep up the back-slapping operation, came to Burton—who was beginning, from certain signs that he noticed, to fear that the other ladies would become similarly affected—and looking imploringly at him, clasped her hands together. "Oh, Mr. Burton, what shall I do?" she said, while tears started to her eyes. "Was ever anything so unfortunate? Those horrid men have done it all; and there they stand, looking like—like—" Here Miss Billy's sobs overcame her, and she was unable to find a simile for the two factors of the disturbance.

Burton really pitied her. She had done her best to

entertain her guests, and now disaster had overtaken her. It was hard, he thought, that such bad luck should befall her, and he racked his brain for an idea of how to extricate her from the trouble. At last a thought struck him.

"Perhaps if the two gentlemen were to leave Mrs. Bull would become quiet," he said. "She seems to be much worse every time she sees them."

"Oh, yes!" she exclaimed. "That'll do good, I'm sure. But how am I to get them to go?"

"If you will authorize me to act for you, I think I can manage the affair."

"Do what you please, Mr. Burton. I knew you could help me. You are so good and true!"

Burton approached the now disconsolate Schmidtlapps, and in a few words gave them his ideas of the situation. Then all three went out into the hall together, and in a few moments the front door was heard to close, and Burton returned alone.

"They are gone," he said to Miss Billy, as she took his hand and pressed it warmly.

"Did you say they was gone?" exclaimed Mrs. Bull, suddenly stopping her laughter, and sitting up in her chair, as composed as though she had just taken her seat to begin dinner. "Now, my friends, we'll all set down and go on with the meal. I never knowed it to fail in gittin' rid of a bore, nor any number of 'em."

"You don't mean to say that you did it on purpose?" said Miss Billy, while every one else looked the picture of astonishment.

"In course I do. Every bit on it. What sort of a time would we 'a' had ef them two fellows had 'a' bin allowed to go on all night in that way! I jist made up

my mind to stop 'em right off. I've tried it afore, and it always does it."

"Well," said Burton to the hostess, who was not yet able to speak, so completely was she overcome by the remarkable procedure of the old lady, "she is the most accomplished malingerer I ever saw in my life! But," he continued, "we owe her our thanks. Have I your permission, Miss Bremen, to say a word to the ladies and gentlemen?"

"Anything you please, Mr. Burton. Perhaps things will go on all right now. After all my trouble and all my care that the thing should go on nicely, to have it spoilt in this way! Oh, I'll never get over it! Never!"

"Yes, you will. The remedy was a severe one, I admit, but it was not so bad as the disease. Ladies and gentlemen, by the kind permission of our gracious hostess, I beg that you will fill your glasses and drink to the health and long life of our friend, Mrs. Willoughby Bull, who has given us a happy issue out of our afflictions."

"I'm much obleeged, ladies and gentlemen," said Mrs. Bull, rising and bowing as the toast was drunk; "I never knowed it to fail. They tried to take the Bull by the horns, but they got gored. Now, we'll go on with the meal, and we'll have a good time yet."

And they did have a good time in the estimation of most of those present. The elimination of the two Schmidtlapps allowed the conversation not only to become general, but general in so subdued a way that dual conversation was not impossible. Miss Billy soon recovered her good spirits, and began to believe that her dinner would not be such a failure, after all. She continued her special attentions to Burton, asked his opinion of

each course as it made its appearance, and of each guest present at the table, and thanked him over and over again for his services in ridding her of the troublesome wit and singer.

“ I never met them but once before,” she said, “ and then only for a few minutes. I thought they’d add to our pleasure, and so I invited them. Mr. Clodd told me just now that they are notorious. It’s a part of their plan to do all the talking in the early part of the dinner and to begin singing after the dessert comes, and to keep that up till the last person leaves the house.”

“ Fortunately we were spared the infliction of the greater part of the programme,” said Burton. “ But what an extraordinary old lady Mrs. Bull is ! I thought every moment she would have a fit. Where did you find her ?”

“ She’s a widow, and was an old friend of pa’s. She helped to make him rich, and so I feel under great obligations to her. But didn’t she go for them ?”

“ She’s one of the best actresses I ever saw. Any physician would have been deceived by her.”

“ Yes,” answered Miss Billy, with an absent air, as though she was thinking of something very different, or was contemplating with a sad heart the depravity of the average man or woman. “ Yes, but it was a deception, Mr. Burton, and falsehood, whether told or acted, always makes me feel uncomfortable. I’m so truthful myself that even the slightest equivocation or semblance of an untruth makes me feel badly, though it may be spoken or acted in a good cause.”

“ You are indeed sensitive, Miss Bremen,” said Burton, not quite sure whether she was sincere or laughing at him.

“Yes, for a long time I couldn’t bear to go to the theatre, for I knew it was all a deception. And as to a magician’s tricks, as soon as I found out that they were juggling, and therefore misrepresentations, they were hateful to me. But ah, Mr. Burton,” with a sigh as though her heart were coming out of her breast through her mouth, “how sad it is to think that as we rub against the world so many of the sweet sentiments of our nature are worn off, and we become hardened to things which once shocked us beyond measure !”

“It is very horrible, Miss Bremen,” said Burton, “to think that the freshness and ingenuousness of youth must disappear as we grow older. It is the fate of us all, but you, I think, have suffered less in that respect than many of the rest of us.”

“Do you think so ? Oh, I’m so anxious to gain and keep your good opinion !”

“I was just telling Mr. Clodd, Miss Bremen,” called out Miss Boggs, from the other side of the table, “that it is the fashion to have all the lights on the dinner-table covered with red shades, and that red should be the prevailing tint of the drawing-room also. He asked me whether the arrangements to-night were according to my suggestion or your own idea.”

“Oh, of course you told him it was your notion. I’ve been so little in society, Mr. Clodd, that I must leave all the ceremonies and the æsthetics to my friends, Miss Boggs and Miss Sorby, who are very kind to me.”

“I told him, Billy,” rejoined Miss Boggs, “that next month you are going to give a ball, and that Selina and I are going to enclose our cards with the invitations. That will at once introduce you to the *élite*, and then by that time you’ll be out of the odious *abattoir*.”

“What’s that you said, miss, about the odorous *abattoir*?” called out Mrs. Bull. “Ef thar’s any bad smells about Billy’s place, it’s her own fault, I guess. Mine’s as sweet as a dairy. I spent more’n fifteen hundred dollars last year for carbolic acid.”

“I didn’t say ‘odorous;’ I said ‘odious,’” rejoined Miss Boggs, tossing her head, and looking viciously at the old lady.

“Oh, you said odious! And what, I should like to know, young lady, makes a *abattoir* any more odious than—than— Well, I don’t know what your father does for a livin’, but I guess it ain’t such a blamed sweet thing that you kin afford to run over other people’s businesses.”

Everybody looked aghast at this onslaught of the extinguisher of the Schmidtlapps. Was she trying another way of getting rid of people she did not fancy? Miss Fitzgerald turned to Burton.

“I am so sorry I came. I arrived here only a few days ago from Dublin, with letters of introduction from a very distinguished lady to the ‘United Women of America;’ and when I went to exhibit my credentials I was introduced to Miss Bremen, and she invited me to dinner. But surely these are not among the first people of the city!”

“If by first people you mean fashionable people, who have plenty of money, give expensive entertainments, and are seen in the Park in elegant equipages, I am afraid some of them would be entitled to be so considered. But they are not even average specimens. Miss Boggs and Miss Sorby are certainly admitted into what is called ‘good society,’ but it would not be fair to consider them as representing the mass of those with whom they associate. The truth is, that there is no standard,

and, in fact, it is well that there should not be. It is better, after all, that people of congenial tastes should mingle together to the exclusion of those who are not of congenial tastes. For an aristocracy of wealth, and of wealth alone, such as exists here, it is perfectly right that the aristocracy of brains should be excluded. They don't want to get in. If they did, it is fair to suppose that, with their superior intelligence, they could accomplish their object."

"That is certainly a new way of regarding the subject. But what has surprised me most since my arrival in your country is the servile imitation you make of European, especially English, customs. I went to a so-called fox-hunt the other day, and I nearly died laughing. In fact, I was almost as bad as our friend there at the other end of the table."

"Five hundred and two thousand, two hundred and fifty-five!" exclaimed Mrs. Bull, who was engaged in earnest conversation with Mr. Clodd, but who spoke these words in a voice that resounded around the room, while she looked about the table with an air of conscious superiority. "The biggest kill of hogs in the world, I guess. It may be an 'odious' business to some people," she continued, casting a withering look at Miss Boggs, "but then some Eastern people gives themselves airs. Did you ever see a hog, young lady?"

"Yes," answered Miss Boggs, to whom this question was addressed, and making a profound bow as she spoke, "I have."

"Oh, you mean you've seen me! Well, I like spunk! As a rule, you Easterners ain't got it. I owe you one," saying which she went on, in a loud tone, with her conversation with the poet.

“ You was tellin’ me jist now that you’d written a pome to yourself.”

“ Yes, madam, I apostrophized myself.”

“ What did you call it ?”

“ ‘ I am but a Man. ’ ”

“ You ought to ‘ a’ called it ‘ Only a Clodd. ’ Ha ! ha ! ha ! That’s only a joke. No offence was meant, I assure you. That’s a real swell down at the other end, ain’t it ?” she whispered to the poet. “ He said he wa’n’t no relation to a man I knowed. But I find it’s the thing here in the East to disown your relations ef they warn’t more’n honest folks, makin’ their own livin’. Billy,” called out this terrible woman, “ I hear you’re going to give a fandango when you goes out o’ business. Let me know when it’s to come off, and I’ll send you a bar’l o’ hams.”

Miss Billy took no other notice of this offer than to bow her head in acknowledgment. Her mortification over Mrs. Bull was fast reaching the point it had attained from the brothers Schmidtlapp, and bid fair to pass that mark. She saw that her two fashionable friends, Miss Sorby and Miss Boggs, were sullen and indignant, and that while the rest of the company were more or less amused, there would be a greater feeling of security in the bosom of every one present if Mrs. Bull could be abated. It was useless, however, to expect that anything could be done. The probability of her going off in a fit of some kind was scarcely to be thought of. Had there been the slightest tendency to apoplexy, certainly the volitional convulsions which she exhibited in the early part of the evening would have produced a paroxysm. No, there was nothing to do but to hurry through with the dinner, and get out of the room as soon as possible.

Though he could not console her in her trouble, Burton could honestly praise the dinner, and his commendation almost atoned for the annoyance Mrs. Bull was causing. The *menu* was excellent, the wines were good, and were of the proper temperature, and were served in the right places. For all these things, however, Miss Billy was no more responsible than was the man in the moon, though she was perfectly willing to take all the credit to herself, and she bowed and giggled over Burton's encomiums as though she really had done something more than pay for the dinner.

She began to feel that she was making good headway with Burton. She knew that he would be a difficult fish to hook, and a still more difficult one to land ; but she thought that, even if he had not nibbled at the bait, he had eyed it with a half-formed idea that he might nibble, and from nibbling proceed, by easy gradations, to swallowing. She was not one to buoy herself with false hopes. She had had, when she first conceived a love for Burton, no very sanguine expectations that she would ever win him. She was quite sure that he had been attracted by Rachel Meadows, but she was unaware of the extent to which matters had gone with him and the lady, and of course entirely ignorant that there had been any disagreement between them. She had noticed, with both surprise and delight, that the extracts from Rachel's lecture that she had read to him had produced a strong impression against her rival. She had counted on nothing more than a slight objection on his part, which might serve as the basis for future operations ; instead of which a decided feeling of disgust had evidently been excited.

During the dinner, although the general effect had been most unfortunate, the calamities she had been

forced to endure had roused in him a degree of sympathy for her which was very apparent, and which had caused him to change his rather distant manner to one of kindness, almost reaching tenderness, that had made her little heart swell with joy. She knew enough of human nature to be aware that any feeling that can be excited in the breast of another, even though it be one of enmity, is more likely to lead to love than that utter indifference which is at once the padlock that closes the heart, and the iceberg that contracts it. She saw that the indifference was disappearing ; she had certainly succeeded in rousing an emotion of pity, and she had read that pity is akin to love. Still, she was aware that with Burton it was a very distant relative, and that she had a great deal to do yet before she could succeed in exciting more than a transient feeling, born of the circumstances of the hour. Nevertheless, so far it was good, and she inwardly rejoiced that, though her dinner might be hereafter looked back upon by all the rest as one of the episodes in their lives that they would not wish repeated, to her there was a prospect of its being the starting-point to the attainment of the supreme object of her existence.

The influence of Burton's presence was also noticed by her in another way. She had been in love with him, according to her light, for several months, during which time she had had occasion to consult him on the Texan legal matter—which he had managed so successfully—and had seen him from afar off in the streets, or in various public places. But she had never till now had a really good opportunity of becoming acquainted with him. Heretofore in all their personal associations he had held himself aloof, and had evidently been unwilling that any other than professional relations should exist between

them. Now, however, she had clearly been admitted into fellowship. She stood nearer to the plane upon which he stood, and had every reason to expect still further advancement in his affection, if she might call whatever feeling he entertained toward her by that name. Yes, she was satisfied. If she could do that much in one day, what might she not expect to accomplish in time? For the future, during a considerable period, owing to the business matter she had placed in his hands, there would be many occasions for meeting, and it would argue little, she thought, for her tact if she could not manage to ingratiate herself into his good graces. When, therefore, she gave the signal, as Miss Sorby had told her she was to do, for the ladies to retire into the drawing-room, leaving the gentlemen to their cigars, she felt, notwithstanding all the *contretemps* that had occurred, that she had done well; and when Burton announced to her that he proposed to go with the ladies, she experienced a degree of elation which almost made her feel as though she could fly. For why should he go into the drawing-room if not for the purpose of being with her? As a matter of fact, however, Burton had left the other gentleman—the poet—to smoke his cigar in solitude for the reasons that he did not wish to be bored by the disquisition on the *ars poetica* which he had been promised, and that he desired to have an opportunity for a five-minutes' conversation with Miss Fitzgerald, who, he had discovered, by one or two allusions made at table, was an intimate friend of several years' standing of Rachel Meadows, whom she had known abroad. But in this last he was doomed to disappointment, for Miss Billy kept close to him, and Miss Fitzgerald took her leave soon after returning to the drawing-room. The pros-

pect was therefore rather dreary, for he was the only man to contend, not only with Miss Billy, but with Mrs. Willoughby Bull and the Misses Sorby and Boggs. The odds were so much against him that he also would have gone home but for the fact that the hostess had invited the young ladies to sing, and he could not well go till their performances were over. After they had finished Miss Billy was importuned to favor them, and Burton could not, of course, avoid adding his solicitations to those of the others. Then she consented, remarking, as he led her to the piano, that it was only to oblige him that she complied, and yet that it was fear of him that had caused her to hold back. "I am ever so anxious to gratify you, Mr. Burton," she said, with a lackadaisical air, "but I hear you are a very severe musical critic, and that anything short of the highest excellence is positively displeasing to you."

"Oh, I am not so bad as that," said Burton, laughing, and yet at the same time pleased with the double compliment she had paid him. "There are other elements in a musical performance, especially a vocal one, than the mere notes and the facility of uttering them. A song, for instance, may not be sung with absolute perfection of technical execution, and yet there may be so much feeling put into it by the singer as to make it a very pleasing performance."

"You are very kind to make allowances for me before I begin. I hope I shall not disappoint you. Here," she said, handing him a roll of music, "select something that you would like me to sing."

Burton turned over the leaves. He saw that all the songs were arranged for a contralto voice. It was his favorite, as it is of most men of sanguine temperaments

and quick feeling. "Voi che sapete," from *Le Nozze di Figaro*; "Il segreto," from *Lucrezia Borgia*; "Lei parlate d'amor," from *Faust*; "O mio Fernando," from *La Favorita*. He would have that. If she could sing that song as it ought to be sung, his opinion of her would be exalted far above the point at which it now stood.

"You have chosen one of my favorites," said Miss Billy, as he placed the piece on the rack. "I will try and do my very best, for I want to please you."

He smiled encouragingly, though he had no idea that she would give anything more than a school-girl rendition of a song that requires not only great technical skill and power, but also a degree of passional activity which he did not believe that Miss Billy possessed. She had not, however, sung ten notes before his anticipations were disappointed in a manner which astonished while it pleased him beyond measure. Her voice was a phenomenal one in all its range of high, middle, and low notes. There was not a shade of falseness in any one of them, and they seemed, from the depth of passion with which they were enunciated, to come from the very bottom of her heart, and with a sweetness, a mellowness, a fulness, that took Burton's mind entirely away from all the commonplace things around him, and caused him to lose himself in a revery of heavenly rapture. Was it possible that a woman like Miss Billy, coarse and vulgar as she was by nature, and whose associations had been in keeping with her origin, could sing like that? He did not think it possible. He did not believe that a soulless woman could put such pathos and emotion into music as did she who was now singing. He had underrated her; she had capacity; all she wanted was a chance to de-

velop. She had been kept back by her ignoble surroundings, and from these she was about to emerge into that higher life that nature intended her to live. His eyes filled with tears—they always did when he heard certain kinds of music—and when Miss Billy finished he could, as on the night before with Rachel Meadows, only stammer out a few words of thanks.

“I am glad you like it,” she said. “I am passionately fond of music; and now that I see that I am able to please you with my humble efforts, I hope you will not hesitate to call me often into your service.”

“You are a siren, Miss Bremen. If you were seated on a rock in the middle of the ocean, and I was at the helm, and you should sing that song, I would steer my bark toward you if I were sure she would go to pieces the next minute.”

“Oh, Mr. Burton,” cried Miss Billy, in an ecstasy of delight, “I am so glad! But then,” she added, demurely, “the sirens were wicked women, were they not, who lured men to destruction?”

“And you lure them to happiness. No one who can sing like you can possibly be wicked, nor,” he added to himself, “can she be vulgar.”

Now, of course, Burton, in enunciating this opinion, did not know what he was talking about. I am bound, however, in the interest of truth, to expose all the shortcomings of one of my heroes—perhaps the principal—even though I run the risk of making him ridiculous. One of the great faults of Burton’s character was his impressibility and his disposition to form opinions from insufficient data. Moreover, he was prone to think that whatever pleased him must necessarily be good, not only of its kind, but in exerting an influence over matters

with which it had no possible connection. The fact, therefore, that Miss Billy had a vocal apparatus so constructed as to produce a particular kind of a voice ; that this had been cultivated by competent instructors, and that at the same time she had acquired the art of feeling what she sang, and of manifesting emotion in her musical inflections, was sufficient to make him believe that he had misjudged her, and that, after all, though she might be deficient in some of the elements of personal beauty, there might be a loveliness of mind and heart more than sufficient to compensate for the lack of comeliness of face or elegance of figure. He knew that some actors and actresses when off the stage were not presentable people, but that they were capable of assuming parts requiring the exhibition of all the refinements and virtues of life. But he thought this was impossible where music was concerned. He did not know, for instance, that the beautiful Signorina Angela Flangieri, whose lovely contralto voice and whose method were even superior to those of Miss Billy, and who delighted the opera-goers at the Academy of Music with her matchless rendition of such parts as Arsace, Pierotto, Orsini, and Leonora, ate peas with her knife, picked her teeth with her fork and her fingers, drank brandy, kicked off the hats of her male friends who came behind the curtain, and swore at her maid with all that fecundity and emphasis and amplification in maledictional exercises that only an Italian of the lower class possesses.

The siren, as he had appropriately called her, though only with reference to the nobler characteristics of her influence over him, had, however, not yet, in her estimation, completed her work. She saw now clearly that through her musical powers she could in all probability

erelong bring the Hon. Tom a suppliant at her feet, and she was determined to let him see that in singing the "O mio Fernando!" she had not shown the whole compass of her voice or emotion. He was perfectly willing to stay by her side as long as she would sing. He was, in fact, an enthusiast where music was concerned, and when a small boy had often followed the organ-grinders who came to Lutetia not only all around the streets of that town, but even to the neighboring villages. So that when his entertainer offered to sing again if he would chose what he would like, he was only too glad of the opportunity. Instead of making a choice, however, he expressed a wish to hear something of her selection. She looked over her music for some time, thinking what she should decide upon as most eligible for displaying her low notes, as well as for moving him not only by its music, but by the sentiments expressed by its words. Finally she made choice of a song popular several years ago, "Oh, cast that shadow from thy brow," which had a very touching minor passage, pitched in so low a key that very few contraltos could sing it. The song represents, in appropriate words and sympathetic music, the distress of a girl who finds her lover in a state of mental depression, for which she very naturally thinks her smiles ought to be an adequate antidote. But they are not sufficient, and not even the "wild roses" that she has placed in her hair exert the legitimate influence that wild roses are, it is presumed, supposed to exert in such cases. Then it is that she sings in the touching minor key, and in notes that might move an anchorite, and in allusions to the inefficacy of the wild roses aforesaid,

"But you have breathed their fragrant air
As some cold vapor from the tomb."

And it must be confessed that Miss Billy did not permit the words or the music to suffer from any lack of effort on her part. She sang them magnificently ; and when she changed at their end to the major key and the words,

“ Nay, speak not now ; it mocks my heart !
How can hope live when love is o’er ?
I only know that we must part ;
I feel we part to meet no more,”

Burton felt that he could have thrown his arms around her, and have sworn that never would he be absent from her five minutes so long as he might live. He was as impressionable and as incapable of separating the ideal from the realistic as was the gentleman from Colorado who visited a theatre at which some touching drama was being acted. A young and pretty woman is on the stage, and she laments in piteous terms and with streaming eyes the fact that she is on her way back to her home of destitution and misery, and without money wherewith to get a morsel of food. The Colorado gentleman is touched ; his handkerchief is up to his eyes, his strong, burly frame shakes with his sobs. Suddenly he rises in his seat and looks around at the audience. “ I am a poor man, gentlemen,” he exclaimed, “ but, by Heaven ! I’ll give that woman a dollar !”

“ Of course I’m making a fool of myself, Miss Bremen,” said Burton at last, “ but I saw the President of the United States cry like a child when he was in Richmond, at the close of the war, when a band serenaded him and played ‘ Home, sweet Home.’ I did the same thing last night—but not so bad as this time—when Miss Meadows played for me, and—”

“Did Miss Meadows play for you last night?” said Miss Billy, turning pale.

“Yes ; but she’ll never do so again.”

This was satisfactory, as far as it went, but at the same time the words expressed too much and too little, and she was afraid to ask for an explanation, lest the discussion might lead to something, she knew not what, that might lessen the antagonism that Burton evidently felt against her rival. She mastered her curiosity in that direction, and said :

“Does Miss Meadows sing well?”

“I did not hear her sing, but she plays magnificently.”

“You must visit her, then?” interrogatively.

“No ; I have never visited her. I met her at dinner last night at Mrs. Moultrie’s.”

“Oh !”

“They are old friends of mine.”

“Oh !”

The conversation had had a dampening effect upon Miss Billy, and it was some time before she was able to recover the necessary degree of equanimity and assurance for continuing her attack. Burton noticed that she was somewhat subdued, and attributing it to the effect of her own music, was glad to perceive, as he thought, that she had the sensitiveness which he had hitherto denied her.

“Shall we join the others?” she said at last, thinking that she had, probably, after all, better desist for the present and let the ferment that she had put into his heart do its work. “I am afraid they will think me very rude for having absented myself from them for so long.”

“And I think, if you will kindly dispense with my

company, that I will take my departure. Miss Bremen, I must thank you for a very delightful evening."

"Must you really go?"

"Yes; I have several letters to answer to-night."

"But I shall have the pleasure of seeing you again very soon?"

"Oh, Miss Bremen, I am afraid you will see more of me than you will like. If you will allow me to come every now and then and hear you sing, life will be more tolerable than it now is!"

"Are you, then, unhappy?" she said, in a trembling voice, and with eyes cast down, as though to hide any tears that might be in them.

For a moment the Hon. Tom hesitated. In the strict sense of the word, he was not unhappy; but at the same time, if he had the command of the universe, he would order things somewhat differently from the way they were going on at present, so far as he was concerned. But he never said what he did not believe to be true, and, therefore, when the question was put point blank to him, he was obliged to answer in the negative.

"I can't say I'm exactly unhappy, but I might be happier. There are degrees of—"

"Then come here as often as you like, and let me sing for you. Perhaps I may add a little to your happiness. I know you will add to mine. Must you really go now?" as Burton held out his hand. "Will you grant me a favor," she continued, as he still held her hand in his—a fat, pudgy hand, with stumpy fingers loaded with diamond and ruby rings—"a little thing for you to grant, but a great deal for me to receive?"

"Yes; I shall only be too happy."

"Then, don't call me Miss Bremen; call me Billy."

For an instant he was on the point of bursting into a hearty laugh at the absurd words and at the utter prostration of soul which seemed to have overtaken his hostess, and which was manifested by her pathetic voice and cast-down eyes. Then he recollected that she had done her best to please him, and that she *had* pleased him, so he answered her with that honest recklessness which so often influenced him.

“I will upon one condition” (a squeeze of the hand encouraged him), “and that is that you will call me Tom.”

It was her turn now to be overpowered, or at least to seem to be. She only answered, however, by another pressure of the hand.

Then the Hon. Tom, having made his bows to the other ladies, and said a few words expressive of the intense satisfaction he had derived from the charming dinner and still more charming company, turned to his hostess for the final adieu.

They walked together to the door leading into the hall. With one hand he pushed back the gaudily embroidered portières, while he held the other out to her. “Good-night, Billy,” he said, with a pleasant smile on his face.

“Good-night, Tom !”

He started and dropped her hand as though he had been shot. Then without another word he turned and left the room.

CHAPTER XIX.

INVESTIGATION.

IMMEDIATELY on his arrival at the Planters' House in St. Louis Tyscovus had inquired for letters. There was but one—the only one, in fact, that he had expected. He recognized the handwriting as that of the woman he loved, the one whom in all the world he regarded as the most honest and the most true. He had had a longer journey from Denver than was usual at that season of the year. Several “washouts,” the results of severe rainstorms, had occurred, and the train had, in consequence, arrived late in the evening instead of early in the morning, in accordance with its schedule time. He was at once shown to his rooms, and after he had gotten rid of the dust of travel, and refreshed himself by a cold bath, he sat down before the soft-coal fire in his comfortable apartment and proceeded to make himself acquainted with the contents of his letter.

He had kept it in sight during all his toilet operations, speculating upon the exact nature of its contents, and looking forward with eager expectation to the pleasure of its perusal. It is said that the anticipation of a joy is always greater than the reality. Whether this be so or not, a joy without anticipation is only half felt. There was pleasure to him in the surmises he formed relative to what Lal would have to say to him, and then he knew that he should enjoy the letter all the more when he

could read it without the disturbing influences of water, towels, brushes, and the other agencies for obtaining physical comforts which a long railway journey render indispensable.

No one seeing John Tyscovus among a hundred other men would have failed to note him as a remarkable-looking man. He was not, perhaps, what would be called handsome, according to the standard of the Apollo Belvidere. His face was thin, his forehead high, his nose prominent, his mouth rather larger than was in strict accordance with the canons of beauty, but his eyes were large and wonderfully expressive of intelligence and of kindness of heart; the outlines of his lips were graceful, his teeth perfect, and his countenance as a whole evidently that of a man of large and liberal ideas, to whom all littlenesses and meannesses were abominations, and who at the same time was possessed of a spirit of independence and of determination before which obstacles that stood in his way would very probably go down, if courage and honesty of purpose went for anything in the contest. Two years' residence in Colorado, during which his existence had by no means been that of the palace to which he had been accustomed in his native land, had done much to strengthen a naturally strong constitution. He was fully six feet in height, but was as straight as an arrow, and every movement that he made showed that there was no element of physical weakness in his organization. He had ordered his dinner to be served in his apartment, and while it was being got ready he intended to read his letter and indulge in that most pleasing of all occupations, castle-building, with a firm basis of present and prospective happiness for the ideal superstructure to rest upon.

He held the letter in his hand, reading the direction over and over again, anxious to get at the contents, yet not willing to lose a moment of the sweet anticipation which he knew must soon yield to the stronger feeling. Finally he opened it. There were two sheets—a long letter! How good of her! He unfolded the first that came to his hand. It was not in her handwriting, but it was welcome, and it gave him good news, and referred him to the other for what to him was sweeter and dearer. Well, it was not so long, then, as he had thought; but doubtless what it lacked in length it would make up in love, and what could be better than that? He unfolded it, and began to read. But surely this was not from his Lal. It was not in her style; there were none of her freshness and originality and love about it; it was strained in its expressions, and it told him that she did not love him. What could it mean? It was evidently written by her, but she was not in it. Not one gleam of his own brave, loving, true-hearted Lal, his “Prairie Rose,” could he find in all its words and sentences and carefully turned phrases.

It was impossible for him to realize that this cold, cruel letter had come from the girl whose glances of love had flashed upon him in his cabin on the butte, who had fallen into his extended arms on that dreadful night when she had sought a refuge from her pursuers, who had plighted her faith to him at Chetolah, and whose passionate kisses, when she had last parted from him, were even yet warm in his heart! No, it was impossible! If she had written that letter, great God! whom could he trust? In what man or woman in all the world could he put his faith if she were false?

He laid the letter on the table, and rising from his

chair, paced the room, his head bent upon his chest, his hands clasped behind his back. The servants entered with his dinner, but he heeded them not. One of them approached him and called his attention to the fact that it was on the table, and was getting cold. He made some sign with his hand which the man interpreted into a desire to get rid of him, so he left the room, and Tyscovus was again alone.

And this, he thought, was the end, after all his love and hope ! At one fell swoop, by a touch of the pen, his happiness had been destroyed, and by the one in whom he had trusted, and who he would have sworn, as she had sworn, would be faithful through all the temptations to which she might be subjected. Doubtless some other man had gained her affections. Well, he might have expected that. She was, as she said in this letter, young and inexperienced in the ways of the world. She had not known her own heart. She had thought she loved him ; she was honest enough, was honest now. Yes, if she had changed, it was right for her to tell him so at the earliest possible moment. But the change must have been a sudden one, for only a week before she had written him a letter full of the sweetest words the language contained ; and this was his dismissal ! It was difficult for him to understand. No, he could not understand.

He took the letter and read it over very slowly and deliberately, weighing each word, as though his life depended on the interpretation it received, and trying to find some evidence that would shake his belief in its authenticity. The handwriting was certainly hers. Still, it would not do for any doubt to exist on this point, so he opened a trunk and took from it another letter

from her dated just a week before this one. He laid the two on the table side by side, and compared several words that occurred in both letters with each other. Yes, there was no doubt that both were written by her. The words "love," "suffered," "ignorant," for instance, as well as many others, were formed in exactly the same way in each, and then the general resemblance was a still more decisive piece of evidence.

Then the date was what it ought to have been to accord with the post-mark, "New York, Nov. 17th, 10 A.M." True, she had never addressed him before as "Dear John." She had always used a warmer designation than that; but then the change was entirely consistent with the alteration in her feeling from love to friendship, that she declared had taken place.

Never before had she signed her name by the initial letter only. It had always been "Lal," "Your own Lal." But this change was also to be accounted for by the fact that she did not regard herself any longer as being his Lal, but only his friend.

But there were two facts that were directly opposed to the letter being her composition. The style was not like hers. It was more finished, and lacked the ruggedness and conciseness of her diction; and then a still more important point, it was orthographically correct as regarded every word. Lal made many errors in spelling. It was not to be expected that, even after the most careful study, she should be able at the end of two years to do what most people do not succeed in accomplishing after many years of attention. Again, he compared the two letters, and he discovered a systematic deviation from correctness that at once excited special interest. In order to have the matter more directly before him, he took a

sheet of paper, and made lists of all those words in both the letters before him which were spelt differently. These he arranged in two columns as follows :

Letter of November 9th.

Reccollection.

Paine.

Admitt. .

Leving.

Grattitude.

Annother.

Remmember.

Allways.

Letter of November 16th.

Recollection.

Pain.

Admit.

Leaving.

Gratitude.

Another.

Remember.

Always.

These differences were to his mind utterly inexplicable, upon the hypothesis that one person had written both letters. That Lal in one week could have acquired the knowledge and readiness of expression requisite for the change he did not believe. To make the matter still more certain, he got other letters of hers, and found that several words occurred in them which were in the letter of November 9th and in that of November 16th, and that they were spelled exactly as in the first named.

A fraud was always possible. He did not see how one could have been perpetrated here ; but that there *might* have been one was quite certain. The composition of the letter, its reference to events that had taken place—all seemed to indicate Lal as the author. The handwriting showed indubitably that she had written it. The forgery of a name so perfectly that not even the person whose signature was imitated could detect the imposture was likely enough ; but the counterfeiting of a person's handwriting so as to deceive one perfectly familiar with the

real writing was to him almost an impossibility, except, perhaps, after years of practice in the perpetrator, and an impossibility of making comparisons with undoubted specimens of the real chirography. In this view he took new hope, that, after all, there might be something that he did not understand—something that would absolve his darling from the guilt of the lie that this letter told. For she had loved him ; that he knew ; and her love had continued all through the year of their separation to this time. She could not have mistaken her heart, and if she said that what she thought was love was only friendship, then she was false.

Now, what was to be done ? Tyscovus was a man of action. His brain worked quickly, his mental processes were rapid and accurate, and then he did promptly what he had determined to do. Still, the subject before him required a certain amount of deliberation. His first impulse was to send a telegram to Lal, asking her if she had written the letter of the 16th of November, and if it expressed her real feelings. Then he reflected that there could be no certainty that the words “ letter of the 16th ” would convey the same idea to her mind that it did to his. For instance, she might have written another letter of the 16th, which she had intended to send him, but which had, by some accident, been replaced by this, which she had never meant to send. It would be better, therefore, to telegraph to her father, acknowledging the receipt of the letter, and intimating that, as at present advised, he would not go to New York. This would lead to inquiries, and such explanation as might be necessary would then be made. He at once, then, sent the telegram which was received on the evening that Burton and Rachel Meadows dined with the Moultries, which, as

the reader will recollect, was the day on which Theodora had given her lecture at the "Martha Washington Medical College for Women."

But he had no sooner despatched this telegram than a servant came to his rooms with another letter, which had just that moment been delivered. He took it eagerly. It was post-marked New York, though the superscription was not in Lal's handwriting; neither was it one with which he was acquainted. He tore open the envelope, and turning over the page, read the signature "Julia Sincote." Then he read the letter. Whatever hope he had entertained was now altogether dissipated. Lal was false beyond a doubt. The letter of the 16th was a real letter, the writing of which was known to the family, as were also the reasons why she had written it. Yes, even the exact characteristic was known; for here it was spoken of as a "cruel" letter, and it was cruel.

Evidently the letter of the 16th was genuine; it had been discussed by the family, and had apparently been agreed to by all but Mrs. Sincote. Moultrie and his wife had, then, also deserted him! Some one else had taken his place—some one considered more eligible as a matrimonial prize for the rich and fashionable Miss Lalage Moultrie.

The good-will of the aunt was, however, clearly manifested in her letter. She at least was his friend, and it would be some satisfaction to hear how the change that Lal had undergone had been brought about. Her letter of the 16th was now quite intelligible. The incongruities that he had thought existed were reconciled. Some one—her mother perhaps—had written the letter, and Lal had copied and adopted it. That hypothesis explained everything, even the good spelling.

He then sent his telegram to Julia Sincote, and tried to eat a few mouthfuls of the dinner, now cold, that still stood on the table. This, however, was hard work. He had no appetite, and the food seemed to stick in his throat. His head was hot and full, so he went out for a walk, hoping that the cool night air—for it was now midnight—might refresh him.

He walked through street after street in the quietest parts of the city ; but at that hour he was not very likely to encounter many people, no matter where he went. In all his life he had never had anything to shake his faith in humanity like this—nothing to cause him a tithe of the wretchedness that this caused him. What was life to him now, when more than half his life was gone ? The rest was nothing. It might as well go too. The sooner the better. On he went, faster and faster, striding over the pavements as though walking for a wager, and then he found himself by the mighty river upon the banks of which the city is built. Immediately in front of him was the entrance to the great bridge. Half mechanically, not caring where he went, only so that he was in motion, he crossed the street and went out on the huge structure. Every now and then a vehicle passed him—a market wagon going into the city, or a carriage containing a boisterous party that had been revelling on the other side, and was now returning in a half-intoxicated condition. It was a long walk before he reached that part of the bridge that was over the water, and then he went on till he was at about the centre of the middle span. He looked over the railing into the turbid, seething, bubbling waters below, and he thought how easy it would be to leap into their flood and end at once all the heart-ache, all the bitterness, all the despair that crushed

his very soul, and made him feel that there were worse things in the world than death.

But he was not the man to fly like a coward from the misfortunes to which he might be subjected, by jumping into a river or seeking death after any other method. He was a brave man, full of both physical and moral courage, and urged always by a stern sense of what he deemed right. He had suffered before this in mind and body. He had, among other frowns of fortune, been imprisoned in Siberia, and had endured without failing in spirit all the hardships and indignities that a cruel and tyrannical government could inflict. He had never yet succumbed before any tribulation that had come upon him, and he had passed unscathed, in his lofty sense of self-respect, through every ordeal to which he had been submitted. True, this was the worst of all. Not even the snowy wastes of a Siberian penal colony, the rigors of a prison life, the blows, the stripes, the hard tasks, the degradation of body and soul, had equalled this. All those had come from enemies, but this had been dealt by the woman he loved and who had sworn to love him in return—the one that he had succored and nursed and sheltered when things were going hardly with her, and he was the one person in all the world that she could call her friend. Great God ! was it possible that she was false ?

He sat down on one of the benches, and though the night was cold, he felt great beads of perspiration starting out on his forehead. The full pale moon was sailing overhead in a cloudless sky. It was just such a night as that on which she, his Lal, had staggered up the butte, her trembling limbs scarcely able to sustain her another foot of the way, and when she had found a

refuge from all her woes in his arms, and now— “No !” he exclaimed aloud. “Never ! She is not false ! I’ll not believe it ! Not though all the world should say it, unless it comes to me from her own lips, spoken to me when I am face to face with her ! Not till I see them move, not till I hear the words ! Never ! so help me God of heaven ! I do not believe she is false !” He started to his feet, animated by a new feeling that filled his whole being and urged him on with a force before which nothing antagonistic could have stood. He retraced his steps over the bridge, and then walked, almost ran, through the streets till he reached the hotel.

There was no one about but a sleepy-looking watchman, sitting on one of the benches in the hall, and a still more sleepy-looking clerk in the office.

“When does the next train go to New York ?” he inquired of that official.

The man looked at the dial behind him. It was two o’clock.

“The next train leaves at four. In two hours,” he answered.

“Call me, please, at half-past three. I am going on that train.”

Then he went to his room, and without undressing threw himself on the outside of the bed, and in five minutes was sound asleep. But how long he slept he was never able to determine with exactness, but probably not longer than ten minutes. He had neglected to look at his watch just before lying down, but it was, as near as he could determine from a consideration of the fact that it was exactly two when the clerk looked at the clock, about ten minutes past that hour. But he was awakened by a strong impression that something had

happened to him that, for the moment, he did not understand ; and then all at once the truth in regard to the origin of the letter flashed upon his mind. He knew it word for word ; he knew where it came from ; it was all as clear to him as day. He lay in bed for several minutes, repeating it over aloud to himself, and imagining by what accident Lal had put it into the envelope instead of the letter she had intended to send, and how the date 1574 had been changed to 1874. Then he got up, lit the gas, and examined the letter closely. There was no doubt that the figure 5 had been altered into an 8. The stroke of the pen making the change was different from that which had formed the original figure, and a part of the little transverse line at the top of the 5 was still to be seen.

He looked at his watch. It was just half-past two, and only about twenty minutes had elapsed since he had lain down. It was very evident that during his sleep, and when the brain was relieved from the many points with which, while awake, it had been engaged, it had quietly solved the mystery of the letter. He lay down again, perfectly satisfied that all the essential circumstances connected with the letter—all, at least, that bore upon his darling and her truth and constancy had been explained. How the letter had gotten into the envelope was nothing to him now. Whether by accident or by treachery mattered not. That it was not hers was all he cared to know.

He slept soundly till he was called at half-past three, and at four o'clock, after a hurried breakfast, he was on the train for New York. Before Moultrie's telegram reached St. Louis, he was two hundred miles on his way.

There was ample time for reflection while on the train, and the more he thought of the matter, the more he was convinced that the explanation he had arrived at was the correct one. The letter was entirely clear to his mind. He had read it a hundred times or more. He knew it by heart, as he did nearly every page of the little vellum-bound book which appeared to be so intimately connected with his fate. And the whole story of the perfidious aunt and the Countess Louise, whose initial was at the end of the letter, was as familiar to him as any incident in his own life. It seemed strange to him now that he had not at once recalled it ; but he supposed his failure to do so was due to the fatigue of travel and the suddenness with which the circumstance had been forced upon his mind. He had not been able, in fact, to gather his wits together. He was like a person who, when suddenly asked a question in regard to a perfectly familiar matter, is unable to give an off-hand answer, and blunders or stammers in the attempt to do so, becoming more and more confused every moment.

Then his mind had been running in quite a different direction relative to the contents of the letter. He had anticipated something altogether different, and hence his brain was taken unawares, and, being in a more or less exhausted state from the general bodily fatigue, was not in a fit condition to exercise all its powers, especially that of memory, which is generally the first under such circumstances to exhibit weakness.

But with the first few minutes of sleep a different state of affairs ensued. He knew that in many positions in which he had been placed he had experienced the most efficient brain-rest from sleep of even less duration than that which he had taken ; and, then, as had often

happened to him before, he had awakened with the whole subject as fresh before him as though he had just read the letter from the book in which it was printed.

He had a compartment in the Pullman car all to himself, so he took out of his pocket Mrs. Sincote's letter, and began to read it over. He had not previously given much attention to its study, but now he read it with the view of sifting it thoroughly, and, if possible, to discover its real object.

One point he settled at once, and it was one that anybody with ordinary common-sense would have determined in the same way that he did. If Lal was the victim of an accident or of treachery, then this letter of Mrs. Sincote's was written with the intention of deceiving him ; for it assumed that the letter of the 16th was a genuine one, and written by Lal because she had ceased to love him. From this dilemma there was no escape. If Lal was still true to him, Mrs. Sincote was a traitress. It was she who was false, and her letter had been written with the intention of heightening the effect which she knew the false letter could not fail to produce. He read it over, therefore, with the intention of studying its motives so far as they could be determined from the words written, and now, with the light he had received relative to the false letter of the 16th, the conclusion was irresistible that Mrs. Sincote had written it with the intention of misleading him. It was a very carefully contrived epistle, as the reader knows, but it was not so cunningly devised that a man of Tyscovus's intellect and knowledge could not see through its misrepresentations and false assumptions. It never occurred to him, then, however, to suspect Mrs. Sincote of having deliberately substituted the one letter for the other ; but he did believe

that she in one way or another had heard of the mistake that had been made, and had set out deliberately to use it for her own ends.

He had seen very little of this lady. On her arrival at Chetolah, Dr. Willis's residence in Colorado, somewhat over two years ago, he had been in her company perhaps half a dozen times, but had not, on any one of these occasions, addressed to her half a dozen words. At that period of his life his mind was occupied with far graver things than in seeking the company of women in whom he took no special interest. She had, in fact, scarcely attracted his notice ; and as to her being in love with him, the idea had never entered his mind. If he had known of her feeling for him, he would have been quick enough to associate her with the act of changing the letters ; and even as it was, though he could not at first find it in his heart to suspect her, the more he thought of the matter, and of her cautious and evidently treacherous letter to him, the more he found it impossible to avoid forming a half suspicion that in some way or other she had taken an active part in the deception that had been practised.

On his arrival in New York he went at once to the Windsor Hotel, and as soon as he could make himself presentable proceeded to Moultrie's house, only a few yards distant. It was just nine o'clock in the evening when he ascended the steps leading from the street to the front door, and he thought, from what Lal had written him in regard to their habits, that he should find them all in the library or drawing-room, according to the particular occupation or amusement that might be engaging their attention. He had not determined upon any definite course of action, but now he thought he would send in his card,

and wait in the reception-room for an answer. For a moment he stood on the large flat stone at the top of the flight of steps, his mind filled with the memories of the past, and then, in rapid succession, with all the incidents, the thoughts, the fears, the hopes of the past three days. In a few moments the question of the truth or falsity of the woman he loved would be settled beyond a peradventure, but for him it was already determined as surely as any event of his life. There was not one lingering doubt in his mind. During the journey from St. Louis he had so sifted and digested all the circumstances of the letter as to be absolutely certain that he had arrived at the true interpretation in ascribing the fraud to Julia Sincote. There was nothing in his heart but joy. She whom he loved was separated from him only by a few walls, and by doors that would open at his touch. In a few moments she would be in his arms. Every moment's delay was an age to him. He rang the bell, and in an instant the door was opened.

“Are Mrs. Moultrie and Miss Moultrie at home?”

“Yes, sir.”

“Will you take my card to them, please?”

“The ladies are in the library. Walk into the drawing-room, sir.”

The man helped him to remove his overcoat, and then, throwing aside the heavy portière, ushered him into the drawing-room.

The house was a deep one, and was situated on a corner. Next to the drawing-room, and on the same range, was a smaller room, the two only separated by an archway from which portières descended. Beyond this was the library, but also communicating, like this smaller room; so that a person in the drawing-room could, if

the portières were separated, see through the whole range of rooms into the library. Tyscovus entered, but did not sit down. As he crossed the floor toward the centre of the room, he turned his face to the left, and there, far back, he saw seated at a table two ladies, both of whom he at once recognized, even at that distance. There were books on the table, and they might have been reading; but at that moment they appeared to be engaged in earnest conversation. He saw that one of them was Mrs. Moultrie, and that the other was his darling. Her face was turned almost directly toward him, and the soft light of the lamp fell full upon it. "Was there ever beauty like hers?" he thought. The raven-black hair, with its lustrous sheen, the soft black eyes, the full, graceful mouth, the clear olive complexion, with the tint of the wild rose struggling to show itself on her cheeks, and barely succeeding, were all there as he had seen them in Colorado, but still more lovely, for they were toned down and refined and spiritualized, as though some heaven-born artist had touched them all with his inspired brush. He stood, scarcely able to restrain himself from rushing in without further ceremony, and then he saw the servant hand to Theodora a salver on which his card lay. She took the little piece of pasteboard, and then, with an exclamation of surprise and pleasure, handed it to Lal. The girl rose to her feet, and for a moment looked around, as though expecting to see him before her. He could hold back no longer. With rapid steps he crossed the floor, and had entered the middle room when she heard him coming. She turned, and in an instant met his gaze fixed upon her. A soft, low cry of joy escaped her lips, and then they were pressed to his, and she was folded to his heart.

"I knowed you would come," she said, as he kissed her again and again. "Oh, no, it warn't in you to think bad o' me, for you was certain to remember, even if you mought be led wrong for awhile, what I said to you on the butte the day I came away, 'that there warn't ary a thing in all the world that could make me forgit you.'"

"I did remember it, darling. It was my confidence in your truth and love that brought me right, after a few hours' doubt, and then I hurried to you, sure that I should find you unchanged."

"I suppose I am of no consequence," said Theodora, holding out both her hands to Tyscovus; "but I must welcome you, if only for Lal's sake."

"And for your own, too, I trust," replied Tyscovus, as he grasped her hands, and raised them one after the other to his lips. "I have not forgotten one of my earliest Colorado friends, and who will some day be still nearer to me."

"Yes, it excites my risible faculties," she answered, with a silvery laugh, "when I think that I shall one day be your mother. But come! sit down and tell us your adventures, and then we will tell you ours. First, however, I must send a telegram to Geoffrey, for I presume that he is looking around St. Louis for you at just about this time. You did not, I suppose, receive the telegram he sent you day before yesterday morning, at ten o'clock?"

"No; at that time I was far on my road to New York."

"It explained everything. However, we shall go over the whole matter with you. I have only one request to make. Be charitable, and extend your forgiveness to the one who has wronged us all."

“ I think I know all that you can tell me. If you and Lal have forgiven her, surely I can.”

Theodora went to the other end of the room to write her despatch, and before she had finished Lal had nearly told Tyscovus the whole story of the fraud. He was scarcely surprised, for, except in the fulness of the details, the story did not differ from that which had, by the exactness of his reasoning, been forced upon his mind.

It was late when he returned to the “ Windsor,” and before he left, a telegram from Moultrie for Theodora was received. It announced what of course they knew, that Tyscovus had started for New York, and then that he himself, with his sister Julia, would do so in the morning. “ By the time you get this,” he continued, “ Lalage will be happy.”

“ Yes,” she said, “ I am happy, but I think I should be still happier if my dear father were here. And he has had all that long journey for nothing !”

“ Not for nothing, dear,” said Theodora, softly.

“ No,” she answered ; “ my happiness has made me selfish. He has saved her, and that is a good deal.”

CHAPTER XX.

THE WILES OF THE TEMPTER.

IN due time Moultrie returned to New York, bringing his erring but repentant sister with him. Evidently she felt in full the disgrace she had incurred. She made no attempt to conceal the part she had played in the affair, nor to extenuate her guilt. She only asked that she might not be compelled to see any member of the family, not even her mother, till such time as it might be supposed their feeling against her had been softened. It was in vain that her brother represented to her that they were all prepared to extend full forgiveness; but she persisted, and declared that she could not look Lal or Tyscovus in the face without being overcome with shame and mortification. It was agreed, therefore, that she should go to Moultrie's country-seat on the North River, and stay there till she had recovered sufficient confidence in the good-nature of her friends and in her own power to face those she had injured, to warrant her return to New York.

Of course the presence of Tyscovus interfered very materially with the course of Lal's studies. They walked and rode together every day, and when not doing either of these things were talking with each other, either in some quiet nook in the library by themselves, or in the evening in the drawing-room with Moultrie and his wife. Congress was to meet in a few days, and arrangements

for the departure of the Moultries had to be made. It had been determined, after due consideration, that Lal should go also, and that the house in New York should be left unoccupied during the winter. Theodora was not feeling very well, but she infinitely preferred being in Washington to remaining alone in New York.

Moreover, another and a still more important point had been decided upon. And that was, that Tyscovus and Lal should be married during the coming winter. Tyscovus had plead so earnestly, and had adduced so many convincing arguments to the effect that nothing advantageous to Lal's education would be gained by delaying the marriage, that her father felt obliged to yield. He showed conclusively that it would be impossible for her to devote her attention to the work of learning lessons and recitations any more assiduously before than after marriage. He promised to be a better instructor than any one that could be found in all the world, "for," reasoned this specious logician, "it is impossible for Lal to study when I am with her, which, of course, is nearly all the time. I am not her instructor, and, therefore, she loses a great deal, whereas if we were married she would get her education from me, and I will devote more time and earnestness to that matter than any mercenary teacher is likely to give."

As to Lal, she admitted that as things were going on there was very little attention paid to the tasks set by Mrs. Bowdoin. When interrogated by her father relative to the matter, she frankly declared that she was ready to marry Tyscovus at any moment, and that she honestly believed nothing would be lost in her educational advancement by such a procedure. Theodora added her arguments and entreaties to those of the parties most in-

terested, so the matter was settled by arranging that on the 28th of December, in Washington City, the nuptials should take place, and that Tyscovus and his bride should then reside with the Moultries during the session of Congress.

Moultrie had been fortunate enough to be able to purchase a large and beautiful house in the newer part of the city. Upholsterers and decorators had been at work at it for several weeks, and it was proposed that the whole family should go to Washington in a day or two, so that Theodora might be able to give her personal supervision to the work that was being done. Both she and Moultrie had their own ideas in regard to house decorations and furniture, and were not disposed to give an order to some fashionable establishment, and then to leave the details to the taste of the workmen, without giving the matter any further care.

The day after the dinner the Hon. Tom Burton had called, as in duty bound, to pay his respects to Miss Billy Bremen. He had found the young lady at home, for she had determined to stay in the house every afternoon till his visit had been made, rather than run the risk of missing him. She was one of those individuals that never let the grass grow under their feet. She was quite sure that she had made a strong and favorable impression on Burton, and she did not intend to leave any room for the assertion that she had failed to follow up her advantage. At the same time, she was aware that there might be danger in exhibiting the full strength of her feeling. She was by no means thoroughly acquainted with Burton. In fact, she had seen as yet only one phase of his character, and that the most superficial—the one, too, that with him was always seen first. Of his good common-sense

and of his steadfastness of purpose after he had gotten over the glamour of first impressions she knew absolutely nothing. But she had sense enough to be aware of this fact. She knew that she knew nothing, and that was a great deal.

Thus far, however, it must be admitted that her conquest had been an easy one. Indeed, she had been greatly surprised at the readiness with which the Hon. Tom had received the flattery she had offered and the attentions she had paid. These latter had been so open, especially after the dinner, when they were together at the piano, and just as he was taking his departure, that both Miss Sorby and Miss Boggs had thought it their duty to inform her that she had gone farther than the customs of "good society" warranted. And Mrs. Willoughby Bull had said that if she—Miss Billy—were "not going to marry that young man, she ought to be, for things was entirely too free and easy and promiscuous-like for mere company." To all of which Miss Billy had turned a deaf ear. So far she was sure she had not gone beyond the bounds of what was proper. Although she did not know the meaning of *finis coronat opus*, yet she had a very clear idea that the object was worth all the labor that she could bestow upon it, and that so long as her wiles appeared to be favorably received by him upon whom she exercised them, there was no danger of disgusting him. That the matter, however, required watchful attention, she was ready to admit, and watchful attention she meant to give it to the utmost of her ability.

Burton had entered her house with very different feelings from those that he had experienced the night before. He had been reflecting deeply upon the situation

of affairs, and he could not avoid arriving at the conclusion that he had acted in a very idiotic manner. The last words, "Good-night, Tom," that Miss Billy had spoken to him had cut him to the heart. They were what Rachel was to have said, and did not, and he could not avoid contrasting the effect that would have been produced upon his mind in the one case, and the effect that actually was produced in the other. The two women were so entirely different in mind and person that he wondered for the moment how he, who had been attracted by Rachel Meadows, a lady, pretty, refined, of good family, should have felt himself in a measure captivated by Miss Billy Bremen, who was not a lady, who was thoroughly vulgar, and whose family—well, it was dangerous to think about families in New York, when he did not know but that the mother of the beautiful and fashionable young lady at his side, whom he drove out to the Park a day or two ago, might have done his mother's washing. He *did* know that she could not speak ten consecutive words of good English. Yes, the words, "Good-night, Tom," coming from Miss Billy's not over-pleasant-looking mouth, had done much to break the spell that had been thrown around him, and he had gone home feeling dissatisfied with himself, and almost resolving that with the payment of his *visite de digestion* his social relations with Miss Billy Bremen should cease.

And the more he thought of the matter after he had arrived at his comfortable apartment in the Menhaden Club House, the more decided he became on the point in question. Seated in his large arm-chair, with a cigar in his mouth, and his clothing so arranged as to facilitate comfort, he had read over the short and touching letter

which he had that very morning received from Rachel, and which he had answered so guardedly. "I was very wicked, and I am very wretched," he read. "Poor Rachel!" he continued, "I have behaved to her like a cold, calculating, contemptible brute. I ought to have gone to see her at once. She was worth the trouble. And suppose she was trying to fool me again? It's no disgrace to be fooled by a woman. And if she was in earnest—and I'll swear she was—I have lost her, and have made a greater fool of myself with that Bremen girl in one evening than Rachel, with everything in her favor, could have made of me in a lifetime." The reflection was not pleasant, so he tried to dismiss the subject from his mind, and turned his attention to writing several letters that he was obliged to mail that night.

And then the next day he had gone to pay his visit to Miss Billy. He was thus prompt because he intended to go to Washington by the night train, to arrange about the Mexican business, and it was probable that he might not be back for several days. Indeed, he might go direct from there to Mexico. He was anxious to get away from New York, and he welcomed the chance that the contemplated appointment gave him.

There was no one in the drawing-room when he entered, but he did not have long to wait, for before he had had time to look around at the articles of virtu scattered about on the wall, and a dozen or more small stands and tables, Miss Billy entered the room.

"How are you, Tom!" she exclaimed, rushing forward with outstretched hands. "I hope that you have not suffered either in mind or in body from your dissipation of last night."

The words of greeting she had used grated offensively

on his ears. For the life of him he could not have returned her salutation in like manner. He merely bowed, hoped she was well, and declared that he had never felt better in his life.

"But you are forgetting your bargain," she said, with a little giggle. "You promised to call me Billy, and here, the first time you meet me afterward, you don't call me anything at all."

"Billy!" he exclaimed, with desperation, "I hope you are well."

"Quite well, thank you, Tom, and all the better for seeing you."

"I hope you will not think me too punctual in calling. But I am going to Washington this evening, and may not be back for some time."

"You could not be that; I am always glad to see you."

"I suppose," he said, finding the conversation languishing, "that you would not care to sing now."

"I will always sing for you!" she exclaimed, getting up at once and going to the piano. "No, don't move," she continued, as he rose to follow her. "I want you to sit down at your ease and listen, or, rather, sit here," drawing, as she spoke, a large and luxuriously upholstered chair to a place on the floor just behind where she would sit at the piano. "I think it is so nice to be comfortable when there is music. You can throw yourself back, and shut your eyes and dream. That is what I like to do when any one is singing for me, provided, of course, that the singing is—is—"

"As good as yours," he interrupted. "Of course you know you sing divinely."

"I know I sing well," she answered, casting down

her eyes, with an attempt at a modest expression, "for I have had great pains taken with me, and I have worked hard to succeed."

He took the seat she indicated and thanked her. He was already beginning to feel the influence of her flattery.

Then she began to sing; and from that time on poor Tom was lost in a revery of pure delight. He had followed her advice, and with closed eyes, so as to shut out all sensory impressions coming through them, he gave himself up completely to the intoxication of the hour. She did not speak, and he did not speak, but her lovely voice filled his heart, and he felt at times as though he could almost worship the being, angel or demon, who was capable of affording him such keen enjoyment. At last she stopped.

"You are very kind," he said, gravely, "to be willing to give me so much pleasure. It is a shame for me to ask for more; but if you are not too tired I would be infinitely obliged for just one more song. I never knew but one woman who could sing it as it ought to be sung, and she is dead."

"I am not tired. Singing never tires me. What is it?"

"Beethoven's *Adelaide*."

"Oh, yes; it is my favorite of all songs."

He had never heard it sung with a tenth part of the fervor or of the vocal excellence that she gave to it. All his late ideas of the coarseness of Miss Billy vanished under the emotion her music excited. It was impossible for him to resist her hocus-pocus, or whatever else it might be. He thought of Orpheus, who even attracted the beasts of the fields and the very trees of the forest.

What matter was it whether Orpheus were handsome or not? He had power to move the heart. The ancient myth was simply to show that music was a force before which nothing in the whole range of animated nature could stand unmoved. What was there strange, therefore, in his giving himself up to such music as this woman was able to produce?

He rose as she finished and stood beside her.

“Why are you so kind to me?” he said, with a little tremor in his voice. “What have I ever done for you that you should be so gracious to me?”

“Why am I kind to you?” she answered, turning round and facing him. “Can you not guess?”

Now, Burton did not know that Miss Billy was in love with him and wanted to marry him. He thought she was disposed to be very friendly with him, and that she wished to gain his good opinion for some object that she had in view in some way connected with the woman’s rights movement. He knew that she had separated from the leaders of the effort in the city of New York, that she had endeavored to set him against them, but he did not suspect for a moment that she was in love with him; so he answered very promptly:

“No, I do not know. Tell me.”

Billy’s face turned redder than ever as she perceived that a crisis in her episode with Burton had come, and that, perhaps, if she managed matters with discretion, she might, within the following ten minutes, gain all for which she was struggling. But she was by no means clear in her own mind how to act. He had opened the door for her by asking her to tell him what it all meant. To be sure, this was something of an imputation that she had been taking an initiative that ought to have come

from him, but she thought she perceived that he had had no idea of ascribing any unmaidenly conduct to her. His inquiry was clearly prompted by a sense of her goodness to him, and of his deep appreciation of her musical genius. Evidently he was prepared to reciprocate to the full any motive which she might have had to spur her on in her efforts to please him.

“I’ll tell you,” she said, still with downcast eyes. “It is impossible for me to keep back the manifestations of any feeling I may have, kind or unkind, good or bad. If I hated you I should let you know it very plainly; but as I like you, I let you see that, too.”

“And you really like me?”

“Yes; more than I have ever liked any one else in all my life.”

“And why?” said the Hon. Tom, bending low over her—“why do you care for me, a comparative stranger?”

“Ah! how can I answer such a question?” exclaimed Billy, clasping her hands together. “I do not know. Can we ever tell, we women, why our hearts become filled with some one of your sex? I only know that you are good and kind, and that somehow or other my destiny seems to be linked with yours.”

Now, if the Hon. Tom had not been in some respects, and certainly in those in which women were concerned, an egregious ass, he would have been disgusted with this speech of Miss Billy’s and with her previous manœuvres. He was not in the slightest degree in love with her when out of her presence; he was capable of appreciating her at her true value, and of experiencing the proper amount of dislike for her, and for what he then had no difficulty in perceiving were unpleasant qualities. But music so

heart

affected his emotional system as to pervert his intellect in a way that, to say the least of it, was extremely illogical, but to which, in some degree at least, all mankind, with a touch of what is generally called “heart” in their compositions, are subject. Why do men fight better under the stirring noise of the drum and fife than when there are no such incentives? Why do others have their arms and legs thrown into convulsive movements under the influence of the lively strains of a waltz or dance? Why do strong, rugged men, who have all their lives defied the church, find themselves praying and the wicked feelings going out of them when some solemn and melodious composition is played on the organ? All these are illogical and incongruous acts, for which there is no rational interpretation. And then, it may be asked—and a like answer would have to be given—why should the Hon. Tom Burton be so moved by the magnificent singing of a coarse-minded and altogether commonplace woman, who had scarcely a redeeming quality beyond her appreciation of music—why should he be so affected as to feel like wishing to make her his wife? Such things are ultimate facts. We only know that they do exist, and it will be apparent, doubtless, that the Hon. Tom Burton, a man of the world and in love with another woman, was one of the most striking instances that have ever been recorded.

He stood in silence after this last speech of the tempter, struggling mentally against the influence that was bearing so hardly upon him. He had still a little—a very little, intelligence and self-control left, but it was fast disappearing. If he had been endowed at the time with the least spark of common-sense, and with the slightest power of exerting his perceptive faculties, he

would at once have known that Miss Billy was acting a part, that there was really no passion in her conduct except that lowest of all, the desire to possess, for the sake of the material advantages she might derive from a matrimonial alliance with a man as distinguished as was Burton. She had heard that he had been offered a high position in the diplomatic service of the country, and the idea that she might, by playing her cards well, go to Mexico with him as his wife, had taken complete possession of her, and was continually urging her on to acts that, in her opinion, would tend to aid in the fulfilment of her wishes.

Meanwhile Burton was silent, and Miss Billy began to feel some little apprehension that unless she followed up her advantage she might lose her prey. The shades of night were beginning to fall, and she knew that, as Burton was going to Washington by the night train, he would be leaving her house soon, and that she would not have another opportunity of attacking him, if at all. But what could she say unless he made some response, either by word or deed, to her last tender speech? In her dilemma she ran her fingers over the keys of the piano, and she played very softly and deliciously, without, perhaps, knowing what she was doing, one of the loveliest of Mendelssohn's "*Songs without Words.*" *That* turned the scale in her favor; Burton laid a hand on her head. She stopped and turned toward him. "Billy," he said, as he drew her head to his breast, "I believe you are an angel in disguise. I don't know whether you love me or not, but if you will try to do so, and will be my wife, you will make me the happiest man in the world."

"I do love you," said Billy, standing up and yielding

herself unresistingly to his embrace ; “ I think I loved you the first moment I saw you, and I will be your wife. Oh, Tom,” she continued, “ I am so happy !”

The probability is that she was happy, and that at that moment her happiness was increased by a genuine emotion of an ennobling character. There was every reason why she should be greatly elated, for her efforts to inveigle Burton into a marriage proposal had been eminently successful. To be sure, he had not been gained by any consideration of her mental or personal characteristics beyond that of her ability to interpret vocal and instrumental musical compositions in a way that took away his mastership of himself ; but for that she cared very little. She had him, and that was the main point, after all.

“ I never heard any one play or sing like you,” said Burton, disposed to dwell upon these characteristics of Billy that he admired most. “ You make me forget everything when I hear you, and I am scarcely responsible for what I do.”

Now, it must be confessed that this was not exactly the sort of speech that a young lady who had just received a proposal of marriage, accompanied by those acts of tenderness that generally attend upon an affair of the kind, would like to hear. To be told by her lover that he is not accountable for his actions, when the chief of these actions—the only one, in fact, which concerns her—is asking her to be his wife and then putting his arms around her, is calculated to dampen any feeling of elation she may be experiencing. But the effect upon Billy was not so great in this respect as might have been supposed by a person ignorant of her real sentiments and designs. She had no fear of losing Burton. She knew,

or at least she thought she did, that when he had once pledged his word to anything, and especially when he had given it to a woman, he would stick to it, no matter how much repentance he might subsequently feel. She had more—infinately more confidence in his honor than she had in his love. In fact, she had no confidence whatever in the durability of the impression she had made. She was clever enough to see through the Hon. Tom as clearly as though his envelope were of glass instead of the skin and flesh of nature and the costume that civilization required him to wear; and she saw very plainly that the present demonstrations were altogether based on a transient emotion, that there was not the slightest depth to them, and that, born as they were of the impulse of the moment, he would bitterly regret his weakness so soon as he was out of her presence. Her object, therefore, was to settle him in his position as her accepted husband so firmly that he could not escape the thralldom without doing such violence to his sense of justice and right and honor that he would never venture to make the attempt.

“When we are married, dear,” she said, “I will play and sing for you all day long. Oh, you will never get rid of me then!” she continued, throwing her arms around his neck.

The first faint glimmerings of the fact that he had made an ass of himself began to dawn upon the Hon. Tom. He winced a little under the encroachments that Billy was making. He had not yet kissed her; he had felt at first as though he should do so, but it had been deferred for a moment, and now he felt quite sure that he should not perpetrate that act. He could not. The idea was one that was extremely repugnant, and his fear

now was that Billy, after throwing her arms around his neck, would, as the ensuing performance on the programme, kiss him.

What to do next he did not know, and the situation was every moment becoming more embarrassing. Here he stood, with his arms around Billy, and hers clasped about his neck. It was impossible for him to stand in that position very much longer, for if he went to Washington that night—and he was now more than ever determined to do so—he would require all the intervening time for his preparations. He made a little movement toward releasing himself, but her clutch around his neck only became the firmer. But the act had the effect of calling forth another tender speech from Billy.

“Tom,” she exclaimed, “you do love me, don’t you?”

“Yes,” he answered, “I think you play and sing better than any person I ever heard.”

This was not altogether a very passionate response, but it was a partial reiteration, and to that extent was satisfactory.

“You don’t love any one else, do you, dear Tom?”

Now, this was a poser, and it was one that by its terms required a categorical answer. Of course he could have lied about it, as many men in his position would have done; but it was not in his nature to lie. He could not tell the truth, for that would be to make the woman he was holding to his heart feel uncomfortable; so he gazed abstractedly at the ceiling, and said, as though the idea which had prompted his last observation was still floating through his mind, “Yes; more divinely than any person I ever heard.”

If Billy had had as much sound intellect as she had of

a certain kind of Yankee smartness, she would have let matters drop, have taken her arms from around Burton's neck, and have let him go, with the assurance she was rightly entitled to entertain that she had hooked her fish so firmly that escape from the landing-net was impossible. But the success she had had was altogether so much more speedy and complete than she had supposed was possible, that her brain was beginning to be a little turned, and she was approaching that mental condition which prompts an individual to form a feeling of contempt for the active or passive powers of resistance of an antagonist. She felt so sure of her conquest that she determined not only to put the chains around her captive, but to rivet them so securely that he would see at once the utter hopelessness of all efforts to free himself, and would be reduced to such an abject state of servitude that her slightest wish would be law. She therefore repeated her question, with a slight modification, and with a little preamble, calculated to lessen any difficulty in giving an answer.

"Of course I know, dear," she said, "that a gentleman like you, living in the gulf of fashion, and thrown with all kinds of beautiful ladies, must have been in love at some time or other; but they're all out of your mind now, Tom, aren't they?"

"Yes, I think they are."

"You don't love that Rachel Meadows, do you? You never did love her?"

"What do you know about Rachel Meadows?" he exclaimed, roused to himself again in a way and to an extent that no other words in the language could have produced, and breaking loose at last from Billy's embrace.

“I know a good deal about her,” exclaimed this young woman, her eyes sparkling with anger and her face assuming the usual livid hue that it did whenever she lost her temper. “I know she’s a nasty, lying, treacherous, disagreeable thing,” and with each adjective Billy stamped her square foot violently on the carpet.

“I know Miss Meadows,” said Burton, becoming as pale as a sheet with disgust, “better, perhaps, than you do, Miss Bremen, and I know her to be everything that is lovely.”

“Then you are in love with her?”

“God help me, I believe I am!”

“And here,” she continued, pounding her chubby fists on the key-board of the piano, and thus keeping up a discordant accompaniment to her speech, “you have been telling me you loved me!”

“Excuse me, Miss Bremen, I never told you anything of the kind.”

“You did! You know you did! And now you dare to deny it!”

“I asked you to be my wife.”

“And isn’t that the same thing?”

“I think not; I did, under the influence of feelings aroused by your beautiful music, ask you to be my wife. I am ready to make you Mrs. Burton whenever it may suit your convenience, provided you have practised no deceit upon me—no actual fraud.”

“What do you mean by fraud?”

“When you were in my office yesterday,” he continued, in a firm, steady tone, and with a resolution that no one could have excelled, for he was at his best, now that the glamour had gone, “I was in trouble, for a misunderstanding had occurred between me and Miss Mead-

ows, whom I had asked to be my wife, and whom I loved with all my heart. I should probably have taken measures to stop all the cross-purposes at which we were playing but for something that you told me about her, and in which you were apparently supported by irrefragable evidence. If in all that, you told me the truth—if your evidence was not manufactured for the occasion, I will marry you whenever you please, even though I leave you at the altar. But as to loving you after the exhibition you have just given me, that is out of the question. If you had shown yourself to be good and honest and true, I should doubtless in time have loved and respected you. All that is now impossible.”

While Burton was speaking Billy's face passed through all the hues of the rainbow, and she looked as though she might be going to have one of the “spells” against which her physician had warned her. The anger, the jealousy, and the vindictiveness that filled her whole being kept her up, so that by the time he had finished she was ready to resume her part in the contest.

“It is you who are the fraud!” she exclaimed, waving her arms wildly. “You promised to marry me, and I'll make you do it, if I have to appeal to the law for protection.”

“Such a procedure, Miss Bremen, will not be necessary. You have only to convince me that you have committed no imposition upon me, and you may send for a clergyman this instant. Or I will go round the corner to the nearest magistrate and be married at once.”

“What do you mean by imposition?” she shrieked. “How dare you accuse me of such a thing!”

“Let me see the newspaper that you showed me yesterday.”

“ I haven’t it ; I lost it on my way home. You ain’t such a fool as to doubt your senses, are you ? Didn’t you read for yourself ? ”

“ I glanced over it merely ; I wish to read the whole of it. Yesterday I had more confidence in you than I have now. Please, therefore, to regard our engagement as standing contingently on the truth of the meaning you conveyed to my mind yesterday. I shall get a copy of the paper this evening. If you are right, I will marry you to-morrow, if you like ; if you have deceived me, you will never have an opportunity of bringing your arts to bear upon me again. ”

“ Very well, sir, I am satisfied. Perhaps you call yourself an honorable man because you say you are willing, under *certain circumstances*, to fulfil the letter of your promise. Now, sir, I want you to understand it is I who cast you off. You are a fraud, sir ! A moment ago you called me an angel ; now you are trying to sneak out of it. Yes, sir, you can go. I have no more use for a fraud like you. ”

“ Then you did deceive me yesterday ? Yes, I see by your face that you did. How I do not know, but that will be a very easy matter to find out. Happily, your machinations will fail. True, I called you an angel—an ‘ angel in disguise ; ’ so much disguised, I may say, that nobody but a fool like me would have taken you for one. ”

“ Go back to your Rachel Meadows, if you like ; if you can stand a woman of her character— ”

“ Stop ! ” exclaimed Burton. “ You— ”

“ You sold yourself to me for five thousand dollars ! A very honorable man ! Oh, very honorable ! ”

In an instant Burton had his pocketbook in his hand ;

he opened it hurriedly, and taking out the check that Billy had given him yesterday, tore it into a hundred pieces and threw them on the floor, while Miss Billy continued to indulge in a series of piercing shrieks, ending by falling apparently in a lifeless condition on a sofa that stood conveniently at hand. Burton looked at her for a moment, and seeing that she was not so dead but that she could open her eyes and glance at him defiantly, he walked out of the house with as much composure as he could command, cursing himself for his folly, but resolved to fulfil to the letter his engagement with Billy if, upon examination, he found she had not imposed upon him relative to Rachel's lecture.

CHAPTER XXI.

CONSOLATIONS.

It was only half-past five o'clock when Burton left Miss Billy in a paroxysm of impotent rage in her own drawing-room, but it was already quite dark. His dog-cart, with its team of bays tandem, in which he had driven up to East Seventy-fifth Street, was at the door, and the young gentleman in livery and top-boots who officiated as groom was standing at the head of the leading horse and beginning to wonder if his master intended to "stay in there all night." Burton jumped in, followed by the youth, who seated himself in that humiliating position which those of his official grade are compelled by the requirements of fashion to assume, and seizing the reins let the team go pretty much as they would through Seventy-fifth Street to the Park, then down the east drive to Fifth Avenue, and then on to the Menhaden Club. How he ever contrived to avoid the vehicles he passed was a wonder. Perhaps if he had tried he would have run into some of them ; as it was, he let the horses have their own way, and their instinct and training had saved him from disaster. The first thing he did on arriving at the club-house was to ask for a file of the *Tattler* for the last six months.

This was obtained with some difficulty ; for, as the clerk informed him, the paper was not now taken by the club, the library committee having stricken it from the

list on account of its unreliability, and the files of the old numbers having been put aside in some out-of-the-way place. Finally he got it, and ascending to his apartment, seated himself in his enormous arm-chair and began the search for the lecture. It was not much of a task, and then he began the perusal, intending to read every word of it from beginning to end.

The beauty of the language, the conciseness of expression, and the refinement of the ideas pleased him beyond measure ; then he came to the passages that Miss Billy had read to him. They were not Rachel's ! They were quoted from Mary Wollstonecraft's " Rights of Women," and were the only obscure parts of the lecture. And, what was more, they were cited for the purpose of condemning them, and they were condemned in no measured phrases.

Again, therefore, he had abundant evidence of his folly in allowing himself to be so egregiously deceived by the vulgar little minx, from whom now, happily, by his discovery of her treachery, he was free. He did not spare himself—he was not the man to do that—but he made a solemn vow that, for the future, he would endeavor to be a different kind of a man. He thought he had in him the nerve to attempt the revolution of his character and the will-power to carry out his intentions. He felt ashamed and humiliated at the thought of what he had gone through during the last twenty-four hours, and he saw very clearly that the chief blame rested on his own shoulders. Now, what was to be done ?

First, he decided to postpone his Washington journey to the following night, and then to return as soon as was practicable. In the arrangements he had contemplated relative to his voyage to Mexico, and of not returning to

New York, he had forgotten that he was under engagement to deliver a lecture on "Texas Before the Annexation." This lecture was appointed for that day a week, so that his stay in Washington would not be long.

Second, he resolved to act generously and magnanimously to Rachel. His escape from Miss Billy's clutches had warmed up the love that was a little cooled by the adverse influences to which it had been subjected. He saw more markedly than ever the differences between the two women, and shuddered when he thought of the life he would have led as the husband of the little butcheress of East Seventy-fifth Street. He determined that he would not let another night pass over his head without making an effort to see Rachel, and to renew the relations which, only two nights ago, seemed as though they were destined to exist through their whole lives.

Having come to this conclusion, which was, perhaps, the most sensible one he had reached for several days, he dressed and went to dinner. Then taking a cab, he drove up to the "Joan of Arc," and sending up his card, waited impatiently to be ushered to Rachel's apartment. He walked up and down the floor of the little reception-room, feeling the gravity of the situation in which he was placed, but resolved to act his part without either pride or prejudice in a manly effort to effect a reconciliation. He regretted that he had not gone to her on the receipt of her note, and he reproached himself bitterly for the excessive caution and distrust that had prevented him taking a large-hearted and chivalrous view of her conduct. Probably, he thought, she had acted more out of playfulness than anything else. Certainly she would never have written him that she was wicked and wretched

if she had not continued to love him. As to her trying to inveigle him into other and deeper complications, that was absurd. Yes, he had been an awful fool to think such a thing, even for one moment. She was made of different stuff from that which entered into the composition of Miss Billy Bremen.

But his meditations were interrupted by the return of the servant with the information that Miss Meadows and her mother had left early in the afternoon on a visit to the country, and that they would not return for several days.

His heart sank within him. "Do you know where they have gone?"

"The janitor is out, sir, and I'm taking his place till he comes back. Perhaps if you were to call to-morrow you could find out."

Yes, perhaps he would call. In the mean time there was nothing to do but to wait till his return from Washington. It would be something, however, of a relief to write to her. So to-morrow he would return and get the address. Then he went back to his club, where we can leave him in safety till we have followed up the movements of some of the other important personages of this history.

When Rachel wrote her note to Burton she was suffering from remorse for her conduct to him and from that mental anguish that comes from the consciousness that through our own acts we have lost something that is very dear to us—certainly the worst form of the affection. The more she reflected upon the matter, the more she was convinced that she really loved Burton, and with an intensity and depth that she had not suspected, even when she stood by his side at the piano and her hot tears were falling thick and fast on his hand.

She had from the first moment of their acquaintance been strongly impressed with the sense of his thorough honesty and ingenuousness, amounting almost to simplicity. In fact, he had seemed to her like some frank and unsophisticated boy, whose innate chivalrous spirit had not been enlightened by living in contact with a world of pretension and deceit. This had been a good foundation upon which to erect a warmer and firmer superstructure, and she had built it with almost as much rapidity as a similar process of creation had been going on in Burton's heart.

She had said nothing on the subject to her mother, for the reason that Mrs. Meadows, while a very excellent woman, had, through her many contests with her late husband, the commodore, acquired an impassivity and unsusceptibility of disposition that repelled any idea Rachel might have had of making her a confidante in a matter requiring sympathy and advice. There was but one person of all her acquaintances to whom she could turn, and that was Miss Richardson. First of all, however, she had her note to write to Burton. As the reader knows, it was short, but expressive and comprehensive. Pages would not have conveyed a more accurate or thorough idea of her mental condition than did the few words she used, except in the one matter of her desire that he should call and see her. In the first note she wrote she had invited him to do so; but upon reflection she had determined to omit any request of the kind, so she destroyed that one and wrote another. "If he chooses to come," she said, "he will know that I shall be glad to see him. He will see that I am sorry for what I have done, and that I have set all pride aside in making my confession."

She had risen early, had written her note, and then taking a cup of chocolate and a biscuit, sallied out for a morning's walk. It was then only seven o'clock, too early, she thought, to walk in the Park unattended. So, dropping her note into the nearest letter-box, she started at a brisk pace down Fifth Avenue. If the Hon. Tom Burton had seen her then he would have been more passionately in love than ever, and indisposed to wait a moment in tendering his forgiveness. She was dressed in a suit of blue cashmere, with a jaunty little hat on her head, from beneath which the tresses of her luxuriant chestnut brown hair seemed to be struggling to escape. Her figure was perfection itself, her hands were nicely gloved, and her feet daintily shod, and she walked with that graceful, firm, swinging gait that showed that she had legs and not pipe-stems beneath her petticoats. There was nothing of the stride in the way that she moved over the pavement. She did not set her feet down on the flag-stones as a pestle is rammed into a mortar, but they glided forward with a decision and an apparent knowledge of just where they were to go, and just how long they were to stay, that almost made one think that they had intelligence and wills of their own. "By Heaven!" the Hon. Tom Burton had exclaimed, when he first saw her come out of a side door and cross to her place on the platform, as she was about to begin that unfortunate lecture in Galveston, "she walks like an Andalusian milkmaid." The simile was not exactly a correct one, for there are no milkmaids in Andalusia, and Rachel Meadows walked more airily, and at the same time lithesomely, than any Andalusian woman that ever lived.

She walked down the Avenue as far as Fourteenth

Street, passing the Menhaden Club-house while the Hon. Tom Burton was still firmly clasped in the arms of Morpheus, though slumbering uneasily under the semi-consciousness that matters were not going well with him. Then she went along Fourteenth Street to Union Square, and along the west side of that thoroughfare to Broadway, and up that street to Pursell's, which place of refreshment she entered, as she often did, for the purpose of getting her breakfast—a meal which, after a brisk walk such as she had taken this morning, she specially enjoyed.

She had bought a morning newspaper as she came down-town, and while her breakfast was being prepared she sat near a window reading the news of the day and the editorial comments. First she read an account of Theodora's lecture, and then the remarks that were made upon the subject and upon that of the education of woman in general. That brought to her mind the fact that Mrs. Moultrie had announced her intention of resigning her professorship. Indeed, she knew that the resignation had already been sent, and would probably reach them that morning. Rachel was not a fool. She had surmised, from the few words of explanation that had been given her, the cause of the dissolution of the relations between Mrs. Moultrie and the college, and the subject set her to thinking whether it might not be possible that there was a limit to the field of usefulness of women that should be ascertained by some better process than the hap-hazard one adopted by the association of which she had been a member up to the time of Miss Billy Bremen's vulgar assault upon her.

She turned over the pages of her newspaper, when the

heading "News from Washington" met her eye, and she read :

"*Complications with Mexico.*—Trouble has arisen with Mexico in regard to the incursions of our troops into her territory while in pursuit of hostile Indians. There appears to be a friendly feeling existing on the part of the Mexican Government, which it is exceedingly desirable should be still further cultivated. At the same time it is highly prejudicial to the interests of both countries that when Indians have crossed from Mexico, and have committed depredations on one side of the Rio Grande, that the pursuit of them should cease the moment they have reached that river. The President has taken the matter into serious consideration, and, it is understood, was yesterday for several hours in consultation with the Secretary of State on the subject. The full result of the conference has not been made public, but it is quite certain that the Hon. Tom Burton, late of Texas, but now residing in New York, will be offered the appointment of special envoy to the Republic of Mexico, with the view of arriving at some understanding satisfactory to both countries. Other matters of importance will also be placed in that gentleman's hands. The President and Secretary are of the opinion that Mr. Burton has a peculiar fitness for the delicate mission in question ; and though he is a Democrat, it was decided that the appointment should be offered to him."

Surprise, delight, pride, regret—all struggled in Rachel's bosom as she read these lines. This was the man she had trifled with, a man who, in spite of his politics being different from those of the party in power, had been chosen from all the eminent men in the land for this position of honor and responsibility. She was proud that

such a man had loved her, proud of him, proud of herself, that she had been able to inspire the love of one in whom the rulers of the nation placed such implicit confidence. It could not be, she thought, that she had lost him forever by one inconsiderate act of which she had fully repented. When he received her note he would come back to her, and then she would amply atone for her fault.

So he was going to Mexico. Oh, if she could go with him as his wife! "Oh, Tom, Tom!" she murmured, from behind her newspaper, "come back to me! Oh, I'll never, never, never say a cross word to you again! My brave, noble, chivalrous Tom! You called me your 'Beauty' last night, but I really believe I'm more of a 'Beast' than Billy Bremen!" She glanced across the room toward a looking-glass, and smiled away the tears from her eyes as she saw how comely she was, and what inestimable advantages, in this respect at least, she possessed over Miss Richardson's "Beast."

Then she turned her attention to her breakfast, and having despatched a couple of Yorkshire muffins and an omelette, with a goodly sized cup of coffee, she resumed her walk up-town. The clock at the Fifth Avenue Hotel indicated nine o'clock. By the time she could arrive at Miss Richardson's residence it would not be too early for her to receive an intimate acquaintance. Miss Richardson had only a short time previously purchased a very pretty little English basement house, situated in West Forty-sixth Street, not far from Fifth Avenue. Here she lived in great comfort, not to say luxury, with a distant relative, a lady of fifty, and two women servants. She had a small fortune of her own, and she had added to it very considerably by her lectures

and her literary labors, chiefly by two immensely successful novels, each of which had been sold to the extent of many thousands of copies, besides being very popular in Great Britain, and having been translated into several European languages. Of course, however, owing to the absence of an international copyright, she had derived nothing but honor from the foreign sales.

Miss Richardson received Rachel with great kindness. "I see," she said, as she kissed her affectionately, "that you have recovered from the effects of that little 'Beast's' assault. I never saw you look lovelier, my dear, than you do to-day. What is your secret? Is it a clear conscience, or early hours, or plenty of exercise in the open air, or a good digestion? Or," she added, looking closely into Rachel's face, over which a rosy blush was beginning to appear, "are you in love?"

"Do you think I look well? It's very strange, for I never felt so miserable in all my life."

"Why, my dear child, what's the matter?" said Miss Richardson, tenderly, as Rachel covered her face with her hands and began to sob. "Are you still worried over that little 'Beast' and her vulgar attack? Don't think of her, my dear. Come," putting her arms around her and drawing her toward a sofa. "Sit down here and tell me what troubles you. You know how fond I am of you, and that my sympathy is always with you."

"It's not th-that—" sobbed Rachel.

"Then what is it? My dear, are you really in love?"

"Yes—ver-very mu-much."

"I never knew of this before. How long, dear, have you been in love?"

"Only since—since—last night," sobbed Rachel, burying her face in Miss Richardson's bosom.

"Only since last night! Well, it can't be so very bad, seeing that twenty-four hours have not yet elapsed."

"But it is very bad, and I'm the most mis-miser-miserable woman that ever lived."

"They're all alike. How could you trust one of them? The man must be very wicked, my dear, who could treat you badly."

"Oh," exclaimed Rachel, raising her head and for the moment stopping her sobbing, "he's not bad at all! He's everything that's good and noble and true. It's I who am wicked, for I be-believe I've bro-broken his hear-hear-heart."

"Pooh! pooh! my dear; men's hearts are not so readily broken as all that, especially for the loss of a woman. If they lose a few thousand dollars in Wall Street their hearts, or what they call such, undergo some sort of a process which they call 'breaking.' But even you, lovely and good as you are, couldn't break the heart of the worst or best man in New York. Now, dry your eyes, and tell me who this paragon is whose heart you think you have broken."

"It's Mr. Tom Burton," said Rachel, wiping her eyes with her handkerchief, and with an effort commanding herself.

"Mr. Tom Burton! So he's the 'Admirable Crichton' whose tender heart has given way in consequence of your real or fancied unkindness! My dear, I have just come in from an early meeting of the Executive Committee of the United Women of America. I saw Miss Billy Bremen, the 'Beast,' there, and I heard her say that Mr. Burton had accepted an invitation to dine with her this evening. And that is not all," she continued, seeing Rachel suddenly become calmer and a

look of indignation beginning to make its appearance on her pretty face. "As I was coming home I met Mr. Burton, whom I know by sight, going up the Avenue, probably on his way to visit Miss Billy ; and as he passed me he was looking as happy as a lark, and was humming 'Le Sabre de mon Père' with as jovial an accent as though recollections of Tostée were floating pleasantly through his head."

"He couldn't have received my letter," stammered Rachel, somewhat taken aback by this report of the coolness of her lover under the injuries she had done him. "I know that he was very much affected last night."

"Now, my dear, begin at the beginning and tell me all about the affair. Then I shall be in a position to advise you, whereas now I am all in the dark. To be sure, I have never been in love, but I think I know what is due to a woman ; yes, and what is due to a man under such a circumstance."

"Yes, I'll tell you all. But I must begin by saying that I alone am to blame. I want you to understand that from the very start, and to bear it in mind all the time I am speaking."

"I don't believe it. You are not talking now like the strong-minded woman I have always taken you to be."

"But I'm not a bit strong-minded. I never was, and I'm less so now than ever. I wish I had never had anything to do with woman's rights. If I had kept in my proper position I would never have behaved so badly to Tom."

"Oh, it's 'Tom,' is it?" said Miss Richardson, with a smile. "Oh, well, perhaps, then, things are not past

cure. Go on, my dear. Never mind the women and their rights now. Tell me all about this sad affair."

"Don't laugh at me, please," said Rachel, looking as though she were about to go to pieces again. "I've been very wicked, for I've made two people unhappy."

"Ah! but think. You may have made two very happy."

"Who?"

"Why, Mr. Burton and the 'Beast,' I suppose. For I have to guess, since you won't tell me, that you have jilted him. In which case nothing would be more like a man than for him to propose to Billy this evening."

"Impossible! I see you don't know him. He would absolutely loathe a woman like her."

"After marriage, doubtless. But I have known refined and educated and high-toned gentlemen to marry their cooks and laundresses after being jilted. That's the way a man's broken heart generally shows itself. Now, will you tell me all about it?"

Rachel told the whole story of her love from the beginning to the end, not only giving the facts, but her impressions, and leaving out nothing that tended in the slightest degree to elucidate the situation. "Now," she continued, as she described the scene on the sidewalk in front of Moultrie's residence, "don't you think I have acted very badly?"

"My dear child," said Miss Richardson, seriously, "I think you acted foolishly in allowing Mr. Burton to go so far on so short an acquaintance. But having done so, and if you were really in love with him—and on that point there appears to be no doubt—I am of the opinion that you were unnecessarily harsh. You accepted the terms he **proposed**, and in doing so you gave him to un-

derstand that you would say the words he put into your mouth. It was too late then for you to think that you had been lightly won."

"Oh, yes, I know all that now."

"But certainly," continued her friend, smiling, "he is not going to lose a treasure like you for a little thing like that. Your note, which was very proper under the circumstances, will bring him back to you if he is worth having and he really loves you. He may hold off for a day or two, but, depend upon it, you will ere long have him at your feet again, more in love than ever."

"Do you really think so?"

"Do I think so? I know it."

"But he's going to Mexico, and may not come back for years."

"He will settle the whole matter before he goes. You have done all that it is proper for you to do toward effecting a reconciliation. It would lower you in his estimation if you were to make any further advances. He will probably answer your note. Perhaps he will come in person. Wait, at any rate, for his next move."

"Perhaps he was going to see me when you met him on Fifth Avenue," said poor Rachel, catching at a straw.

"No," rejoined Miss Richardson, mercilessly, "he was then far above your street. But, my dear," she continued, putting her arms around Rachel's waist and smiling kindly, "he was really looking very much worried, and was evidently only whistling to keep his courage up. He had a cane in his hand, and he was switching the air with it very savagely as he passed me."

"Poor Tom!" exclaimed Rachel, sadly; "I am sure he is very miserable."

"'Poor Tom's a-cold,'" quoted Miss Richardson.

“ If he is still walking in the Park as fast as when I met him he’s warm enough by this time. He is perfectly able to take care of himself, I think. Now, I’ll tell you what I think you ought to do. Go home and wait to-day for him, or his answer to your note. Then, if the affair is not arranged to your satisfaction by to-night, go out of town for a day or two. Depend upon it, you will lose nothing in his estimation, neither will you diminish your prospect of ultimate happiness by this course. I see by this morning’s papers that he is summoned to Washington. He will be back here, without doubt, before he goes to Mexico. Special envoys don’t leave the country on a day’s notice. Of course, if he does not love you, or if his love is no stronger than milk and water, you may never see him again. In which case, I hope you would not waste a thought on him, much less a tear. But if he is the man you take him to be, he will come back to you, my dear, loving you more fondly than ever.”

“ Then you think there are some good men in the world ?”

“ Good men in the world,” said Miss Richardson, gazing out of the window vacantly, “ yes, there are good men in the world.”

“ And you have known some yourself ?”

“ I knew one,” she answered, as though automatically. “ But don’t ask me any questions about the men I have known,” she continued, rousing herself with a little laugh. “ It is your man we are talking about, and I am telling you how to get him back. My dear child,” she went on, “ I think your ‘ Tom,’ as you call him, is a good man. I am not sure that a good man isn’t better than a good woman. There are times when I lose faith

in my own sex. But not in you, for you are the sweetest and the gentlest of them all. You said just now that you are not strong-minded. Ah, my dear, when is a woman strongest in mind? Is it not when she can gain the pure, mastering, and chivalrous love of a man like your Tom, who is willing to lay down his life for her? Don't mind what I said just now. *These* are my true sentiments. I knew one man to die of a broken heart for the woman he loved. There, there! go home now and get your letter, and never fear but that all will be well. Of course, we shall lose you from the ranks of those who are fighting for the rights of women. They all go when a man comes along and takes them. Look at Mrs. Moultrie! One lecture, and then a resignation."

"It was a splendid lecture."

"Yes, it was splendid, and she is a glorious woman. But we cannot keep such as she with us. It is as you said the other day. Only widows and only old maids like me are to be relied upon, and I wouldn't trust the widows any farther than I could see them; and the only old maid who is thoroughly reliable is myself."

Rachel took her leave, her spirits restored, and confident that, as Miss Richardson had told her, all would come right between herself and Burton. She had never seen her friend in such a mood before, and she had a little suspicion that, notwithstanding her repeated asseverations to the contrary, Miss Richardson had once upon a time been in love.

CHAPTER XXII.

LOSSES.

WHEN Rachel arrived at the "Joan of Arc" it was nearly one o'clock, and she found her mother somewhat worried in regard to her whereabouts. She had, however, left word that she was going for a walk and would not be home to breakfast, so that there was no great amount of anxiety. She often did that very thing of starting for an early ramble through the streets, and taking her breakfast at Pursell's. It gave her opportunity for reflection which the home breakfast did not; for her mother, though, as I have said, a good woman and very much beloved by her daughter, had several little troublesome peculiarities which Rachel, when her mind was preoccupied, found it expedient to avoid rather than to attempt to combat.

She entered her pretty little parlor, and there on her desk was Burton's letter. She knew it at once, and she opened it hurriedly, with mingled feelings of pleasure and apprehension. After she had taken it out of the envelope she stood with it in her hand, fearing to open the single fold, and trying to imagine its contents, though she knew she could ascertain them in a few seconds by a little motion of her fingers and a glance of her eyes. Finally her joy seemed to predominate; a smile overspread her face, and a rosy blush mantled her cheeks. "I know he loves me," she said, scarcely

above her breath. "Surely, he would not give me up for a single fault, when I have repented so sincerely—and then he is so kind ! He would never be so cruel as I was." She raised the single fold that covered the writing and read. As she did so her expression changed, and tears which she did not try to repress came to her eyes.

"My poor, dear Tom !" she exclaimed, as she read the short note again. "And it is I who have made you so unhappy. Oh, what a wicked monster I am ! His wound bleeds ! My wound, that I wantonly gave him when his heart was full of love for me—full of the expectation that I loved him, and that I was going to speak kindly to him. Oh, I could tear my eyes out with shame and grief when I think of all the sorrow I have caused ! Mine is as nothing to his ; I am suffering justly. It is no more than I deserve, but he, my darling !" pressing, as she spoke, his note to her lips, "if I could only go to you, how gladly would I do so !" She rose from her chair and hurriedly paced the floor, as though she fretted at the idea of the impossibility of her rushing into his arms. At that very moment the Hon. Tom was seated in the Central Park kissing her note to him, and studying the paper with the view of identifying a little spot that he had detected on the surface, and which he had finally determined was a tear. If these two unhappy mortals could only by some magical power have been brought together, the reader would be spared any further details of their history. But, unfortunately, there was no way of doing this, for the one was in the "Joan of Arc," and the other three or four miles distant in the Central Park. Their history is therefore not yet ended.

It was evident to Rachel, from an attentive consideration of Burton's note, that for the present he did not feel equal to an interview. His wound was still bleeding, and time would be necessary for the assuagement of the hemorrhage. It would be better for her, therefore, to follow Miss Richardson's advice and go into the country for a few days. The change, too, would do her good, besides enabling her, from the absence of those disturbing factors inseparable from a city life, to give more thought and sympathy to her "poor, suffering Tom." Where to go was the next question, and on this point her mother's wishes, if she could succeed in inducing that lady to consent to the change, would exercise a governing influence.

She did not have long to reflect upon the matter, for while she was in the midst of her cogitations her mother entered the room in a state of great excitement, and holding an open letter in her hand.

"Oh, Rachel," she exclaimed, "we are ruined! All our little fortune is gone at one blow. Read that! What we are to do, Heaven only knows!" She sank into a chair, while Rachel, scarcely able to comprehend what had happened, took the letter and read as follows:

" 157 WALL STREET, NEW YORK, }
November 20, 1874. }

"DEAR MADAM: A short time before his death Commodore Meadows invested his entire fortune, amounting to about the sum of fifty thousand dollars, in the stock of the 'Tillitulum Plate-Glass Works,' which at that time were doing an excellent business, and which, as you know, have ever since paid a semi-annual dividend of three per cent, or a total of about three thousand dollars a

year. Under these circumstances I did not, as the trustee under his will, think it advisable to change the investment, though I could at any time within the past six months have sold out the stock at par. So safe did I think the concern, that, in accordance with her request, I invested ten thousand dollars belonging to Miss Meadows in its stock.

“ But I have just received a visit from the secretary, who informs me that there will be no dividend for the past six months ; that the company has lost heavily, is largely in debt, and that it has been deemed advisable to close the works, and to wait for better times. This unfortunate state of affairs has been induced by the action of Congress at its last session in reducing the duty on plate-glass to such a low rate that it is impossible for the American industry—which is yet in its infancy—to contend with the foreign manufacturers, who have entered into a combination to undersell the American producer with the hope of breaking him up, even if they lose money in the attempt. As you see, their efforts are being crowned with success.

“ You could get very little for your stock now, and therefore I advise you not to sell. Besides, there is a possibility that Congress will, at its ensuing session, restore the duty, in which event the ‘ Tillitulum Plate-Glass Works ’ will resume operations, and all will again be well.

“ I am, very respectfully and truly,

“ ROBERT PENGAVIN.”

“ Well, mother, it is bad, to be sure,” said Rachel, “ but it is not death to us. It only means that I shall have to work a little harder than usual. I was begin-

ning to reduce the number of my lectures, for we were getting along so nicely on your fortune and what I had saved, that it wasn't necessary for me to work so hard as I once did. But now I shall do all I can. I am sorry for you, mother," she continued, "but you know you shall never want while I can work. We shall be able to live here just the same as though nothing had happened, and then, you know, there is the hope of which Mr. Pengavin speaks, that Congress will restore the duty."

She embraced her mother as she finished talking, and tried to comfort her by soothing speeches; but the old lady could not see beyond the fact that her fortune—two thirds of which by law would have been Rachel's but for the Commodore's will—was apparently gone, and she continued to sob and to wipe her eyes with a handkerchief already wet through with her tears, notwithstanding all her daughter's efforts to quiet her.

But when Rachel suggested that it would be a relief to go away for a few days, Mrs. Meadows agreed at once to the proposition, was eager to get out of the city at the earliest possible moment, and although she continued to sob, she went about the work of getting ready with a surprising degree of alacrity. Rachel could not, however, avoid feeling a little hurt as the idea occurred to her that, as often as she had gone to her mother with her sorrows, she had never been able to draw out a single tear, or anything more than some commonplace observation about trusting in Providence. Now, however, the loss of a few thousands of dollars threw her into a state of uncontrollable grief. Her mother was not, then, so impassive as she thought; she was impressionable enough to the loss of her money. Where to go was the next point to be considered. Happily, while they were con-

juring their brains over the matter, a note arrived from Miss Richardson, saying that she had determined that a little change would benefit her, and suggesting that they should all go together to Babylon, on the south side of Long Island. "It's a little cool, perhaps, at the seashore for some people," she wrote, "but I have often gone down there at this time of the year, and have found it delightful. If you agree to this plan of mine, come round, you and your mother, and take lunch with me at two o'clock. The train leaves at four, and we can go to the Thirty-fourth Street ferry direct from my house."

This was very agreeable to both the ladies, though it somewhat hastened their preparations. Rachel wrote a hurried note to her friend accepting the invitation, and soon afterward she and her mother were seated at Miss Richardson's hospitable table. At six o'clock they were sniffing from the veranda of the Watson House the cool ocean breeze that came from the waters of the Great South Bay.

The next morning Burton repaired to the "Joan of Arc," but the janitor only knew that Miss Meadows and her mother had left the house shortly before two o'clock on the previous afternoon; that they had gone out of town, "somewhere on Long Island," he believed, but exactly where he did not know; and they would be absent for one week. "By that time," said Burton, as he walked away dejectedly, "I shall be back from Washington, will have delivered my lecture in Boston, and will have all the time I want to devote to my poor, suffering Rachel."

He went to Washington that night, and the following morning had an interview with the Secretary of State.

The questions of the incursions of hostile Indians from the Mexican Republic into the United States, and that of following them by the troops of the latter country, were discussed, and Burton's views on the subject were so practical, and apparently were such as both countries would agree to, that the Secretary was delighted. "There is another point, Mr. Burton," he said, as he took several imposing-looking documents from a drawer in his desk, "that the President is very anxious to have brought to the attention of the Mexican Government; and that is, the adoption by that nation of a treaty which I have prepared with great care, and which I propose to submit to the Senate during the ensuing session of Congress. The President and I are both of the opinion that this treaty will, if ratified by the high contracting parties, prove mutually advantageous, and it is hoped that you will be able to urge it successfully on the Mexican Government. Now, how soon can you start?" Burton reflected for a moment, and then said that he thought he could be ready in ten days.

"That will do very well," said the Secretary. "Congress meets next Monday, and I do not care to have you go before that time. Perhaps, even, it would be better to delay your departure—say to the 20th of December. There is a steamer leaving New York on that day. I am anxious to consult with several prominent senators and others relative to this treaty, and they have not yet arrived in Washington. Yes, I think we may fix your departure for the 20th. I will have your instructions ready for you by the 10th, and there will, therefore, be time for any explanation of them that you may require."

"Have you any idea," inquired Burton, "how long I shall probably be absent?"

“Not the least. These Mexicans move slowly. Probably, however,” after a little reflection, “you may be gone a year.”

“It will not be necessary for me to return to Washington before starting?”

“That I cannot tell at present. Should it become so I shall telegraph you. Now, as you will probably wish to see the President before you return, and as I know he desires to see you, I have half an hour at your disposal, and will go with you to the White House.”

But the President was so deeply interested in the Mexican business that he kept Burton considerably over the half hour that the Secretary of State had at his disposal. “It appears to me, Mr. Burton,” said his Excellency, “that you are just the man to arrange our affairs with Mexico in a satisfactory manner, and I congratulate myself on the good fortune that has enabled me to secure your services for the country.”

“If it is no secret, your Excellency,” said Burton, as he rose to take his departure, “I would like to know how you happened to think of me in connection with so important an appointment?”

“Oh, you must ask the Secretary about that! I expect to be abused by the party press—that is, by the press of my party, for selecting a Democrat for such a high diplomatic position. Have you any objection, Mr. Secretary,” he continued, turning to that official, “to informing Mr. Burton how we happened to pitch upon him?”

“None at all,” answered the Secretary, laughing. “When it became necessary to send some one to Mexico to represent the country, and the President requested me to make a nomination to him, I thought at once of

my old friend Geoffrey Moultrie, of New York, who I knew was, from his long residence there, acquainted with the principal personages of the country, and with the traditions and prejudices of the people. I wrote to him asking if he could be induced to accept the place. But he replied that, having just been elected to Congress on a special issue, he did not see his way clear to accepting any office that would require him to resign his seat. Knowing that he was not a politician in the party sense of the word, and having the utmost confidence in his honor and knowledge of men, I requested him to suggest to me some one whom he knew personally, and who in his opinion would perform the work required with fidelity and efficiency. He replied at once, and spoke in such high terms of you that, in conjunction with what I know of you from your general reputation as a member of the last Congress, there was no doubt in my mind as to my duty in the premises."

"And you may add, Mr. Secretary," said the President, laughing in turn, "that the moment you mentioned Mr. Burton's name I recognized him as the gentleman who had made more effective speeches against my administration than any other of my political opponents. I thought, after reading two or three of them in the *Congressional Globe*, that the man who could discover so many weak points in my official conduct would be admirably calculated to sift thoroughly any matter committed to his charge, and then Mr. Moultrie's letter settled the point."

"I am very much obliged to you, Mr. Secretary, and especially to you, Mr. President," said the Hon. Tom, somewhat overcome by the magnanimity of the two high officials, "for the confidence you have placed in

me. It will be my constant effort to see that it is not misplaced. But, Mr. President, I have never questioned your patriotism, nor have I ever, having in mind your great services to the country, doubted that you were sincerely desirous of doing full justice to all sections. Besides," he added, with one of his handsome smiles, "I have always stood in a kind of wholesome awe of you, for I have never forgotten that I was one of the garrison of Vicksburg."

"Oh, yes! You were there, were you?" said the President. "Well, you fought like heroes, all of you. I respect every man, Mr. Burton, who stood up bravely in fair fight against me. But how is it that you are simply 'Mr.' Burton? I thought every man in the Confederacy was at the end of the war at least a colonel."

"I was a brigadier-general, your Excellency," said Burton. "But I dropped my military title as soon as the war was over. The last six months of my service were spent in a military prison. I was captured—"

"Oh," exclaimed the President, interrupting and smiling, "are you the General Burton who was captured, with his whole cavalry command, by a couple of regiments of infantry under Sanders?"

"I was that unfortunate man," said Burton; "and I have nothing to say in extenuation except that, before that I had, with that same cavalry command, captured half a dozen regiments of all arms of the service."

"Well," said the President, eying him very sharply, "I don't think you will let the Mexicans surprise you. If you do, then I shall cease to consider myself any longer a judge of men."

"So I owe this to Moultrie," said Burton, as he sat in his section of a palace car on his way back to New

York. "He has been better than his word. But good-by to Venice and the 'Venetian Gondola Manufacturing Company' for the present. That's a thing that will keep, I think. If there ever was money in anything it's in that idea."

He went to bed, and awoke to find himself in Jersey City at six o'clock in the morning, the most dismal place at that hour of all the dismal places that it falls to the lot of the traveller to visit.

After his dinner that evening he went up to Moultrie's, not only to thank his friend for his kind offices in his behalf, but also to ascertain if they had any information there of where Rachel had gone. He found the whole family at home, but somewhat unsettled, as they were ready to go to Washington on the following day.

"I never can thank you sufficiently," he said to Moultrie, after he had exchanged greetings with him and Theodora and Lalage, "for the letter you wrote to the Secretary of State in my behalf. I never should have heard of it from you, I know; but the Secretary was communicative enough to tell me its general purport. Do you know, my friend," he continued, with feeling, "that when I think of what you said about me I fear that you have seriously misunderstood my character. I am apprehensive that I am not suited, either by natural bent or by education, for any position involving judgment or tact. Now, won't you tell me honestly in just what I am lacking, or in what I am redundant? I have no false pride in the matter, and I don't mind the presence of Mrs. Moultrie or Miss Lalage. Women are very observant, and while I don't suppose they have paid any attention to me, there is probably some fault of

mine that they have observed, and that I hope they will be good enough to call to my notice."

"My dear fellow," said Moultrie, laughing, "I am quite sure that you are better suited for this Mexican appointment than any other man of my acquaintance. You are excellent at great things. It is only the little ones that seem to give you any trouble."

"No, it is worse than that. There is something radically wrong in my character, but I am not competent to detect it with certainty. You know it is a legal maxim that 'No man is a judge of his own case,' and I have noticed that the same principle holds good in medicine, as physicians never, if they can help it, prescribe for themselves. Now, I ask you, as a friend, to take the knife into your hand and cut me open till you find the disease, if it is not so obvious that exploration is not necessary. I don't want to be spared, and I promise to take your opinion as final, and to set to work honestly to rectify my faults. I believe in a man's power over himself in a matter of this kind, and I think I have will-power enough to apply the moral cautery to any moral ulcer you may detect."

"My dear Burton," said Moultrie, "you ask of me no more than one friend has a right to ask of another, and knowing, as I do, your thorough sincerity, I think it is my duty to give you my impressions of your character and disposition. Remember, however, that they are only impressions that have been formed from rather insufficient data; for although I have seen a good deal of you, I think in order to know a man well one should live with him. But ever since I first knew you—which, you will recollect, was soon after you took your seat in the last Congress—I have kept you under close observation;

and though I cannot pretend to have arrived at any great degree of certainty in my results, I will give you my deductions for what they are worth. And they may all be summed up in a few words. You lack concentrateness ; you are too diffuse ; at the same time, when you take hold of a matter you pursue it with great ardor for a while, often to find out that you have made a mistake. You detect your error very soon, and then you retrace your steps without much regard to the consequences. When, however, you are sure you are right, you persevere with a constancy and a force of determination that are almost sure to result in success. The truth is, that you don't sufficiently consider before you enter upon a course of action. If you did this you would commit fewer errors, and you would be remarkable for the accuracy of your judgment and for your perseverance. Now, in this Mexican matter I was sure you would reflect deeply about it, and when your serious thought is given to a subject nothing more can be asked. You will do the best with it that can be done."

"I think you have got at the truth," said Burton, after a moment's reflection, "and I am eternally obliged to you. But I think I am really worse than you imagine. I have done some very foolish things lately—things to which I gave no consideration at all, and one of which, but for an accidental allusion, would have led to the most disastrous results—the blighting of my whole life. Still, you have done me a great service, and I thank you. Now, Mrs. Moultrie, may I ask for a stroke or two of your knife, or, rather, scissors ? The judgment of a sensible woman or two would be of inestimable service to me."

Theodora looked at her husband inquiringly.

“I think you may gratify Mr. Burton, my dear,” he said. “He evidently is not afraid of the most severe criticism. If you know anything against him tell him, by all means.”

“I know nothing but good of Mr. Burton,” answered Theodora, smiling.

“Thanks,” he said; “but that is because you don’t know everything that I have done. But I am here now in the pillory, and I want you all to throw a stone at me. Moultrie’s stone is ‘diffuseness.’ I am spread out over too large a surface. I am like a piece of gold that the beater thinks he will make cover a square foot, when it is only fit for half that space. As a consequence, it is too thin for use. That’s it—I’m ‘too thin.’ Now, Mrs. Moultrie, I really want you to throw something. I’m thoroughly in earnest. From this night on I’m going to be a new man, and my improvement is to be based on your opinions.”

“The only criticism I am able to make, Mr. Burton,” said Theodora—“and I make it with some reservation—is that perhaps you are more influenced by your emotions than is sometimes safe, and that when you come to bring your intellect to bear, you find out that you have done something that does not meet with your own approval—and yet it is scarcely proper to speak of this, without qualification, as a fault. If we were always to stop to reflect the world would lose most of the noble deeds that are daily being done. If, for instance, the man that sees another fall into the water were to stand thinking whether he should jump in after him or not, weighing all the arguments for and against, the probability is that he would let his fellow-creature drown. The man who thinks in such a situation doesn’t act; but the one who,

on the impulse of the moment, acting through his emotions, and who does not stop to consider his own safety or the welfare of his wife and children, risks his own life to save that of another. Of course it is better to be governed by the emotions sometimes, and by the intellect at others ; but it is almost impossible to draw the line. Every man, I suppose, must be a judge for himself. I should not like a man who was always influenced by his intellect and never by his emotions ; such a one would necessarily be cold, calculating, and selfish. As for women," she continued, smiling, " we are supposed to be always governed by our emotions, and not to use our reason at all."

"*You* use reason, Mrs. Moultrie," exclaimed Burton, "and you employ it to good effect, too. Between you and your husband I've got my character pretty well mapped out for me, and I'm going to see what I can do to improve it. But, Miss Moultrie, have you nothing to throw at me ? I am used to hard knocks by this time. Come, I'm still in the pillory. But," he continued, "I perceive that you have never given a thought to me. So I'll step down from the pillory with my humble thanks to the kind friends who have pelted me, and with the reiteration of my determination to turn over a new leaf, and, as the Scripture says, 'To do my duty in that state of life to which it has pleased God to call me.'"

"That is the catechism, Mr. Burton," said Lal, smiling.

"So it is. I knew I had seen it somewhere. It appears to me, Miss Moultrie, that you are looking particularly good-natured this evening."

"I have never been cross to you, have I ?"

“No ; you are very sweet to every one.”

“If you had heard her remarks on Miss Gildersleeve the other morning,” said Theodora, with a light laugh, “and had seen the savage way in which she put the *Tattler* into the fire, you would have learned that she can inject a little acid into her disposition when occasion requires.”

“Lal is particularly jolly at this time,” said Moultrie, “because Mr. Tyscovus, a very dear friend of hers, arrived a couple of days ago. He dined with us this evening ; but, having some business with several gentlemen from Colorado, was obliged to leave early. I want you to know him. By the by, have you read the evening papers ? I see one of our friends has met with a serious loss. You remember Miss Meadows, with whom you dined here last week ?”

“Yes !” exclaimed Burton. “I was about to ask where she had gone. What about her ?”

“She and her mother, between them, have lost sixty thousand dollars by the collapse of the ‘Tillitulum Plate-Glass Works.’ There’s a full account of the failure, with a list of the stockholders, in the *Pinnacle*. It is ascribed to the reduction of the duty on plate-glass by the late Congress. I’m not so much of a free-trader as you are, you know. I think some of our infant industries should be protected. This of plate-glass is one of them, and you see that as soon as the duty is removed they have to close their works.”

While Moultrie was speaking Burton’s face had assumed an expression of chagrin and distress, that gave evidence of the state of his feelings produced by the intelligence. Moultrie noticed it, and attributed it to the fact that Burton had lost money by the failure.

"I didn't know you were interested in the factory," he said. "However, it is well to know these things as soon as possible."

"No," said Burton, "I am not interested, but I am very sorry for Miss Meadows's loss; and it is all my fault, for I introduced the bill reducing the duty on plate-glass, and made a speech in its favor. It seems that my capacity for doing harm is unlimited, and this time I have hurt one who is very dear to me. As we say in Texas, I feel as though I ought to be 'shot with a pack-saddle.'"

"I had a note from Miss Meadows to-day, dated from Babylon," said Theodora. "She went down there with her mother and Miss Richardson for a few days. She seems to be taking her loss with great equanimity, for she does not even mention it. Unless," she continued, taking the letter from the table and reading it, "this may be an allusion to it. 'I find,' she says, 'that I shall have to do a greater amount of work than for some time past. I am getting up a new lecture on "Women in Non-Christian Nations." I find it a very interesting subject, and that I can write here much better than I can in town, where I am every moment liable to interruption.'"

"Mrs. Moultrie," said the Hon. Tom, "I am sure our friends here will allow me to say a few words to you in private. Shall we go into the library? It is a matter of great importance that I must communicate to you."

Theodora signified her consent, and led the way into the library, where Burton poured into Theodora's sympathizing ear the whole story of his love, his rebuff, his subsequent conduct with Miss Billy, his repentance, his

present unhappiness, and his intense desire to re-establish his relation to Rachel as her accepted husband.

“For I do love her, Mrs. Moultrie,” he continued. “It’s about the only thing I’m sure of now, but I know that as well as I know that I’m alive. I’ve ruined one of the most important industries of the country by my tinkering with the tariff, and caused Rachel to lose a large sum of money. I’m going to study that question over from the beginning; and perhaps, in the general reformatory process that is to be initiated, I may change my views on the subject of free-trade. But in the mean time help me to straighten out things with Rachel.”

“I don’t see how there can be any difficulty about the matter. You love her, and I think she loves you. Her note to you was honest undoubtedly; for she is not a woman to play false deliberately in that way. You were too impulsive, you see. You bore her along with you, and she began to see that you were both going too fast; so she, in her effort to put on the brakes, exerted more force than she intended, and stopped the motion altogether.”

“I suppose that is exactly the way it happened; but what am I to do? I can’t sit quietly and let her drift away from me entirely. And she will if she stays down there writing a lecture and I go to Mexico.”

“No, you can’t do that, and I am willing to do all in my power to bring you together again. What shall I do?”

“Oh, Mrs. Moultrie, you know better than I can tell you. I place my fate in your hands. Do what you think best.”

“It would be very easy for me to telegraph her, asking whether she would receive you if you came to Babylon—

and I have no doubt she would reply in the affirmative—but I think you should have the opportunity for becoming more intimately acquainted with each other. You have had no courting, and thus you are both losing what is often the happiest period of life. As you know, we go to Washington to-morrow, to be absent all winter. Now, how would you like it if I should invite Rachel to spend the time between this and the 20th of December—when you sail—with me in Washington? You will have business there, and you can make that city your headquarters till you are ready to go to Mexico.”

“My dear Mrs. Moultrie,” exclaimed Burton, raising her hand to his lips, “you are an angel! Nothing could be better than the plan you propose.”

“Then we will consider it settled, so far as we are concerned. It only remains now to get Rachel’s consent. A letter mailed to-night will reach her to-morrow morning, and if she will go with us I will ask Mr. Moultrie to delay our departure a day.”

“You have made me very happy. I begin now to see everything *couleur de rose* again—as it was that night when we walked together from the piano to where you were sitting. I seemed then, as some poet has it, ‘to walk on thrones.’”

“I saw you were both very happy,” said Theodora, smiling, “but I had no idea that you had gone so far as to become engaged. Now, I must send you back to Mr. and Miss Moultrie, for I have to write my letter to Rachel and mail it before ten o’clock.”

“God bless you!” said Burton. “How sweet some women are in their ways!” he continued, as he went into the drawing-room; “and how horribly vulgar others

are !” he added, as the thought of his experience with Miss Billy Bremen flashed across his mind.

He and Moultrie discussed the approaching session of Congress and the Mexican business till Theodora returned with her letter. “ I have asked her to telegraph me on its receipt,” she said. “ If you will stop in to-morrow morning at eleven o’clock, I shall probably be able to tell you something you will like to hear.” He rose to go. “ You shall not be without your share in the good work,” she continued, smiling, “ for you shall be allowed to drop this into the letter-box at the corner.”

He thanked her, and departed, with a load taken off his heart.

The next morning at eleven Theodora showed him her answer. “ A thousand thanks,” it said. “ I will join you with pleasure, according to your arrangement. God bless you !” “ You see,” continued Theodora, “ that the proverb ‘ Doubly blessed is the one who reunites alienated friends ’ is having an application to me.”

“ Yes,” said Burton. “ ‘ Blessed are the peacemakers, for of such is the kingdom of heaven.’ ”

“ I thought,” she answered, laughing, “ that it was little children that constituted the kingdom of heaven ; but I have no doubt that there are plenty of peacemakers there.”

Then it was settled that on the next day the Moultries, with Rachel, should go to Washington, and that Burton might go at any time he pleased, but not on the same train with them, for Theodora intended that the meeting between the two separated lovers should be in her own house, with all the accessories that refinement and ele-

gant surroundings could give, and not in a railway car. Burton finally determined that he would go that night, and he agreed that he would not call till he received an intimation from Mrs. Moultrie that his presence was desirable.

CHAPTER XXIII.

DISCOVERIES.

THE south side of Long Island, for persons who are not afraid of salt air, and plenty of it, is a delightful region all through the months of October and November, and often far into December. For those who are fond of the water it is especially so, for along nearly the whole of its extent runs the Great South Bay, a portion of the ocean shut off from the main body of the "great deep" by a low sandy bar, which, under different names and occasional interruptions of its continuity, acts as a kind of natural breakwater to the force of the huge waves that roll in from the south. This bar is not high enough to shut off the breezes, and hence, so far as the ocean air is concerned, there is as much of it on the coast of Long Island as though no sand appeared above the surface between there and the Cape of Good Hope. But it makes a comparatively smooth and placid lake out of what would otherwise be as turbid a piece of water as any other part of the ocean, and hence is particularly affected by those who like to sail about in the trim little yachts which do there abound, and yet do not wish to run the risk of sea-sickness or shipwreck.

The morning after their arrival at Babylon Miss Richardson and Rachel walked down to the landing, a distance of something less than a mile, and after a little preliminary bargaining engaged the "Swan," a sloop-yacht

commanded by Captain Jabez Tooker, and with a crew of a stout boy, his son Samuel, for a voyage to "Fire Island," as that part of the bar opposite Babylon is called. Mrs. Meadows, having recollections of the Commodore still in her memory, hated everything of the semblance of a sea-going craft. She was probably apprehensive that in some way or other quarter-deck discipline would be enforced upon her should she set foot on anything that went upon the water. So she expressed such a decided preference for remaining under the comfortable shelter of the Watson House, that not even the temptation of a breakfast at Mrs. Dominick's could induce her to leave it. She was not a pleasant companion on such excursions. She was not a woman who was able, without grumbling, to adapt herself to circumstances. A blue-fish, though cooked five minutes after its exit from the water, was not relished by her unless it was served with all the accessories of fine linen and china, and these were not to be had on Fire Island. So the two younger ladies started off by themselves, leaving the elder one to the more congenial amusement of discussing with two friends she had come across, the comparative excellences and defects of their respective clergymen.

There was a fresh wind from the south blowing that morning, and the little craft had to beat against it as it sailed over the bay. The two mariners occupied their respective proper positions—the commander at the wheel and the crew forward—while the ladies, carefully wrapped up in shawls and cloaks, sat snugly ensconced in the little cabin. Rachel already felt better for the change. There was something here to take her thoughts from herself, or, rather, from the subjects that for the last few days had occupied them to the exclusion of every

other. She was not a woman who was inclined to become moody or morbid. Her temperament was naturally hopeful : she was disposed rather to see the bright than the dark side of things, and to bear the inevitable, when she was satisfied that it was inevitable, with sufficient equanimity and with a determination to make the best of it. She had never, even when in the depths of her self-reproaches, lost the hope that in some way or other, and sooner or later, Burton would be brought back to her ; and the beneficial effects that she was experiencing from the change of air, scene, and associations were not exerted in causing oblivion of what had occurred, or in benumbing her sensibilities, but in increasing the natural elasticity of her spirits, and in enabling her, through their invigorating influences, to be still more confident that all would yet be well.

The night before, she and Miss Richardson had discussed the financial problem, which, however unimportant it might seem to Rachel, was really of moment. The suspension of the Tillitulum Plate-Glass Works had entailed a loss of nearly four thousand dollars of their yearly income. Rachel had about two thousand dollars to her credit in the bank, and this was all. Without any more than a pleasant degree of exertion she had been making, for the last two or three years, an average of three thousand dollars a year. This she did by giving lectures on astronomy to several prominent schools for young ladies in New York and the neighboring large cities, and by writing short essays and stories for magazines. Her lectures required scarcely any work except that of giving them, for the subject was one with which she was perfectly familiar, and the writing of a couple of literary compositions every month was a labor of

love. But now all this was changed. Of course she and her mother could live on three thousand dollars a year; but if they wanted to keep up their present mode of life, to continue to occupy their apartments in the "Joan of Arc," and, above all, to lay by something every year, she must manage, in some way or other, to double her present income, so that she should have at least six thousand dollars. All the way down to Babylon she was racking her brain in the endeavor to find a subject for a short course of lectures that should be somewhat above the range of those she had heretofore delivered, and yet not so abstruse as to repel the great body of commonplace individuals who desire instruction at the least possible expense to their reflective powers—the persons whose mental organizations cannot digest strong food, but who require a sort of intellectual beef-tea that they can take in and assimilate without any severe taxing of their intellectual digestion. Rachel was prepared to give them this kind of food, but she meant that it should be the best of its kind. So she puzzled her little brain (*little*, I desire all my strong-minded women readers to bear in mind, is not used here in its meaning of an adjective indicating small size, but as one expressing endearment, after the manner of the Spaniards and Italians, and for which there is ample warrant among English and Americans. Rachel's brain, I may as well say at once, was larger in the essential elements for making mind, and of far better quality, than that of any one of half the men of my acquaintance) in the endeavor to hit upon a subject for her lectures that would be interesting and instructive to the people that go to lectures, and that would constitute a basis for the mild intellectual pabulum it was desirable to supply.

Railway travelling is, as every one knows, conducive to thought, unless there is some pertinacious wretch near you who will insist on talking to you, and making you strain your voice in yelling back at him ; and the train had not gone more than half the distance to Babylon before the topic had come to her, and in a sudden way that made it all the more impressive. " Women Outside Christianity," or some such title, would about express the idea that came into her head. It was a large theme and a noble, and it had its material advantages in the fact that it appealed to a larger class than had any of the other subjects that she had heretofore ventured to discuss.

But, of course, for the preparation of a series of three or four lectures on a subject such as the one she had selected, it was necessary to consult many authorities, such as could only be found in a large library. She was an " alcove reader" in the Astor Library, and was in the habit of frequenting that institution armed with pencil and paper-pad, and spending whole mornings there in making notes and extracts from works bearing on the particular subjects of her studies. Of course she could do nothing of the kind at Babylon, and hence before she had arrived at that place she was already desirous of going back. But she could do this : she could arrange in her own mind the general scope of her lectures, and could do something toward the composition of the introductory one, without the necessity of consulting authorities. Rachel had all her life been an omnivorous reader, and she had given a great deal of attention to the subject of the development of the social status of woman in all ages of the world and in all nations during the historic period. She was an excellent linguist, and hence her researches had not been confined to works written in the

English language, but had embraced the literature of France, Germany, Italy, and Spain.

Moreover, she was not one to sit down and make a lecture by transcribing the words of different authors and connecting them with a narrow thread of her own ideas. She cited authorities for the support of views she had advanced, or in opposition thereto, and she commented upon them with a freedom, a perspicuity, and a thoroughness that caused the listener to understand that she was not a mere compiler of other people's theories or facts, but that she had sufficient intelligence and independence to have views of her own, and enough command of language to express them in a lucid and agreeable manner.

As she sat in the little cabin on her way to Fire Island to taste the culinary productions of Mrs. Dominick, she was laying out the plan of her first lecture, which she had decided should present a succinct view of the position of woman among the ancient Jews. Her reading had taught her that the belief so generally prevalent, that the sex was held in higher honor among this people than among Christians, was an erroneous one, and that many most unjust and degrading practices in the treatment of women were engrafted upon the Jewish law, to be expunged under the more beneficent dispensation of Christ. She had not yet mentioned her proposed scheme to Miss Richardson, but now she laid it before her, and went off at once in the most energetic and eloquent manner to talk of the ideas of the inferiority of woman which were held by Moses, Abraham, David, and Solomon, and which were predominant among the people chosen by God from among all the nations of the earth as his special favorites.

Miss Richardson listened in silence, and with both pleasure and astonishment.

"You are a wonderful woman, my dear," she said, at last. "I have never given you credit for half your worth, and now we are about to lose you—you who can do so much good to the cause of poor, suffering woman all the world over. Of course, after you and 'dear Tom' arrange your little differences, that will be the end of you, so far as work is concerned."

"I do not think so," said Rachel. "I shall do more good than ever if I shall become Tom's wife. What have I or any other woman done by lecturing, more than simply to amuse and instruct? We do not change the opinions of a single man, nor do we add to the happiness of one man or woman. Now, suppose every woman in the world should marry a man with the intention of making him happy, and were to live up to her purpose, don't you suppose she would generally succeed, and that she would at the same time secure her own happiness?"

"Ha, ha, ha!" laughed Miss Richardson; "as though woman had nothing else to do in the world than to look after the happiness of some man. If a woman has a brain—and I presume her possession of such an organ of some degree of development is not doubted—even though it be ever so small and ever so deficient in convolutions, she will want to use it for something else than looking after a man's happiness."

"But in looking after some man's happiness she is doing the best possible thing to secure her own. So that, even from a selfish standpoint, she cannot do better. However, that is a side issue. What do you think of my plan to increase my income, and what do you think of my proposed first lecture?"

Miss Richardson did not immediately answer these questions. She seemed to be weighing the arguments arising in her mind for and against both of Rachel's propositions.

"I'll tell you what I think," she said, at last. "I do not believe that you will ever give another lecture as long as you live."

"Oh," exclaimed Rachel, blushing, "you think that before I can deliver another I shall be married!"

"Yes, that is exactly what I think. The letter that you received from your Tom, and of which you told me last night, shows that his mental condition is not essentially different from yours. Of course, under such circumstances, it will be impossible that you should not meet very soon, and that your misunderstanding should not be corrected. Then you will probably agree with your Tom that, as he is going to Mexico for an indefinite period, it will be well for you to yield to his solicitations, and go with him as his wife."

"That is what I should like," said Rachel, frankly. "My dear Amelia," she continued, "I am tired of the life I have been leading ever since I became a woman. Not the working part of it—that I like—but the isolation, the loneliness, and, above all, the thought that after a few years, when I am old, I shall be without any one in all the world to care for me."

"In about such a position as I am in now."

"No, I did not mean that; for you are different; you do not care for the society of men. I do; or, at least, I care for the companionship of one good and true man, who will protect and love me. There is no happiness on earth, to my mind, comparable to that, and for such a man I am willing to forego everything else."

"You carry the same enthusiasm into your love affairs that you do into your plans for lecturing," said Miss Richardson, somewhat sarcastically.

"I am speaking," replied Rachel, with just enough elevation in her voice to show that she noticed Miss Richardson's tone, "exactly as all women who are in love feel. I thought you liked honest words from me. But if I am too free, or if you think I am indelicate, I shall be more reserved. You invited my confidence, and I gave it."

"Oh, my dear child, forgive me!" exclaimed Miss Richardson. "I am a cross old maid, and since you have spoken so honestly to me I'll be equally frank with you. I am envious of you—envious of your happiness, envious of your bright young life all before you, with a man worthy of you and whom you love—envious of your fresh and pure heart, and of all the ardor and earnestness with which you speak, showing how honest and truthful you are; yes, I am even envious of the blush that suffuses your cheeks when the name of your Tom escapes your lips. But not meanly so. God knows I would not rob you of a single one of your charms, or of your chances for a life-long happiness! But when I see you as you are, the thought comes into my mind that once I was like you, with like feelings and a like prospect of happiness, and that I lost it all through my own folly and wickedness—and worse, oh, much worse than that!—and then I am a little cross, as I was just now. But only for a moment, dear; and then I am ashamed of my thoughts and words; for if I know myself, I know that I am sincerely anxious for your happiness, even though in securing it I have to lose you."

“ Oh, I know how good you are, and now I have made you unhappy !”

“ No, I am not unhappy. I have long since given up all such ideas of happiness as I once had, and have sought for it, and with fair success, in other directions. It was only a momentary pang which your sweet frankness caused me, and which is now gone, leaving me none the worse, I trust, and certainly none the less anxious to bring you and your Tom together. He'll be a fortunate man, my dear, when he gets you, and if he maltreats you my curses shall follow him, even should he flee to the uttermost ends of the earth.”

“ I have no fears on that score. I wish you knew him ; a child could lead him with kindness ; and if I am ever his wife I mean to be very kind to him in all things.”

“ And while you are striving to make him happy I shall be working for the rights of my sex. Now, I will tell you a secret. I have written a play which is an illustration of the wrongs that women suffer at the hands of men. It would take twenty plays to cover the whole ground, and therefore I have restricted mine to a single point—the terrible outrage and disregard of the rights of nature, to which the common law and the law of this great State of New York subjects her when it deprives her of the right to take her own children from the control of a brutal husband and father.”

“ Yes, that is very hard.”

“ Hard ! It is infamous ! But I have not only written the play, I am going to take the principal part and act it.”

“ You are going on the stage ?”

“ Yes ; I am studying the character of ‘ Hester Good-

ridge,' and in a few days I shall attend the first rehearsal at the 'Protoplasmic Theatre,' where the play will be brought out."

"You astonish me very much. I had no idea you had any liking for the stage."

"I have always had a desire to be an actress, and now when I have an opportunity of appearing in a drama of my own composition, I am delighted. I shall not only feel that I am rendering good service to the cause that I have so much at heart, but I shall gratify that love for being before the public, which is one of my chief pleasures. You have been frank with me, and I intend to unbosom myself fully in regard to my characteristics. I court applause. I love an honorable notoriety. I am most happy when I am before a large audience, receiving their rapt attention or their heartfelt plaudits. I could not settle down into a humdrum life with a man, and spend my days in looking after his comforts; and the admiration, the attention, the devotion of one man, would not satisfy me. I crave popularity. I like to see my name in the newspapers, to have my opinions quoted and commented upon, either favorably or unfavorably; preferably the former, of course, but still noticed. Now you see what a very vulgar woman you have for your friend—one who seeks to please the multitude, and one, therefore, who stands on a lower plane than you do, my dear, and who in all the world knows but one person she cares to specially distinguish from the crowd, and that is you."

"Yes, you are very good to me; but I am sure you are doing yourself injustice. You are exaggerating the very natural love that you and almost every one has for the good opinion of their fellows. I do not believe

there is any unworthy or ignoble tendency in you, no matter what you say."

"Well, I shall not try to convince you. Come! we have sat here long enough; let us go on deck, get a whiff of the breeze without having to take it after it has passed over that coil of tarred rope, and see where we are. We cannot be very far from Fire Island."

There was a stiff breeze blowing, and the little vessel lay so far over on her beam-ends as it struck squarely against its mainsail, that the two women found it somewhat difficult to keep their feet. Nevertheless, with the assistance of the crew, they managed to get to the windward side of the after-part of the sloop, and to sit down on the cushioned seat that ran around that section. Looking to leeward, they saw that they were within half a mile of the Fire Island wharf, and the commander informed them that they were sailing direct to the landing nearest to Mrs. Dominick's, which he expected to reach without being obliged to tack again. His anticipation was verified, and in a few minutes the friends were walking up the long wooden pier, at the end of which was the unpretentious domicile of Mrs. Dominick, which, though an insignificant, not to say repulsive, looking place from the outside, was full of the good things that come out of the sea ready to be cooked and to be served without disguising and perverting French sauces, but with the accompaniments of good bread, sweet butter, and fresh Long Island cream and eggs.

As they had each taken nothing but a cup of coffee and a biscuit before leaving the Watson House, and as it was yet only eleven o'clock, they ordered a substantial breakfast of an omelette, stewed oysters, bluefish, Saratoga potatoes, and hot rolls, and then set out on an ex-

ploring expedition to the ocean side of the island. They followed the board-walk that led over the sand to the beach, but had not gone more than half the distance when they saw in front of them a man and a woman, who had come along a branch walk that led from a little cottage a few hundred yards to the east of Mrs. Dominick's and joined the main thoroughfare. The couple were talking vigorously, and the female portion was gesticulating violently and stopping every now and then to enforce her words with vicious little stamps of her foot. The man seemed to be expostulating in a mild way, for he frequently threw out his hands with the palms upward, in the deprecatory manner of the Latin races of Europe, and occasionally shrugged his shoulders to such an extent as to quite bury his ears in the capacious fur collar of his overcoat. He was short and thick, and the low, soft felt hat that he wore, and which was battered out of its original shape, did not add to the dignity of his appearance. He was smoking a cigarette, not of the very best quality either, and as the wind came from the south it blew the offensive vapor, after it had been further contaminated with the emanations—strongly garlicky—from his lungs, right into the faces of Rachel and her friend.

“Let us pass those nasty people,” said Miss Richardson, angrily, “or else go back. Another minute of that wretch's smoke will destroy all my appetite for breakfast.”

They hurried forward, but as they approached the man and woman something in the manner and walk and general “get up” of the latter forced itself upon their attention, and at the same instant they recognized her as Miss Billy Bremen.

"My little Beast!" exclaimed Miss Richardson, while Rachel shrank back, as though preparing to return to Mrs. Dominick's. "I wonder what in the name of all that's disgusting brought her here! No, no, my dear"—for Rachel was still holding back—"she can't eat you, and of course you will not recognize her. Come, let us go past them and sit down on a bench there under the shed."

Reluctantly Rachel allowed Miss Richardson to draw her along. As they approached the excited couple it was impossible to avoid hearing a portion of their conversation.

"You told me," said Billy, "that you would go away out of the country and never come back, provided I gave you ten thousand dollars. You got the money, and here you are still. You are the same old liar that you always were."

"Yes, I am here, *todavía*. But, *que quieres, mi alma?* Vat do you vant?" shrugging his shoulders as he spoke. "I vas ready; I go in twenty minute, *muy pronto*. But you not get ze man. You make one miserable failure, *seguramente*. I am *mejor*, better than no man."

"No, you are not. I want you to go. I never want to lay eyes on you again."

"Ah, *mi dulce! mi cara bien! Porque estas tan dura?* Vy you so hard vit me? *Yo te amo*—I luff you, *con todo mi corazon*, vit my heart all."

"I don't want your love!" exclaimed Billy, snapping the fingers of both hands in the air. "I want you to go back to Cuba, as you promised. Now, will you go?"

"No! *Nunca*. Nevair! *Tu es mi mujer*. My vife. I vill not go. *Aquí estoy!* and here I vill stay," with

which words the man jumped from the board-walk to the sand, into which his feet sank till they were covered, and it really looked as though they were rooted to the earth.

At that instant Miss Richardson and Rachel passed them unrecognized by Billy, for she was facing the indignant Cuban, and evidently getting ready to give him very emphatically some more of her ideas as to his future conduct.

"Well," said Miss Richardson, as soon as they were out of ear-shot of the contending parties, "did you ever hear anything to equal that in all your life? She's married to him! And evidently trying to get rid of him in order that she may marry another man and run no risk of a prosecution for bigamy. Didn't I tell you she was a beast? I saw what she was when she treated you so outrageously. I saw it in her eye, and now it is evident to you, even if you didn't take my word for it before."

"Yes, the man is certainly her husband. She did not deny being his wife when he called her so, and he seems determined to stick to her."

"It's all very horrible. Probably she's been married to him a long time, and here she has been imposing upon us as a single woman, and affecting to hate the very sight of a man! I've known traitors to the cause before this, but she's the very worst specimen of a fraud that I ever came across. Oh, how such women sicken me with human nature! A bad woman is, as I think you once said, my dear, worse than a bad man. Probably because we expect more from a woman, and are more shocked when we find her wicked and degraded. But it has sometimes appeared to me that there are

depths of brutality and pollution into which women sometimes fall that man at his worst never reaches."

"That may be, but such cases are altogether exceptional. Mr. Burton said the other night at dinner that women were better than men, and Mr. Moultrie agreed with him that if women could govern the world it would certainly be more moral than it is now."

"I am not so sure of that. Look at the monsters of iniquity in the guise of women that have sat on thrones within the historic period. Look at Semiramis, Cleopatra, the two Catherines—in fact, all the empresses of Russia, Isabella of Spain, and many more that were worse than the men of their times that were sovereigns. The fact is, I am not quite sure that it is not always dangerous to place women in power. I would not trust myself. If I were an autocratrix I would probably do what I pleased, regardless of abstract justice. And one of my first acts, if I were to be this instant invested with absolute power, would be to have that little Beast carried out to sea and drowned."

"What's the matter with you to-day?" said Rachel, laughing. "I have never before seen you in such a humor. You seem to have got up with your left foot foremost, and the sight of the 'Beast,' as you call her, has aggravated you into saying things that are contrary to everything you have heretofore said."

"Well, never mind what I say to-day," rejoined Miss Richardson, with a smile that was not without a tinge of sadness. "That woman has upset me, I admit. She is here for no good. I suppose that man lives here, and she has come down to see him. Evidently she is his wife. I didn't get a sight of his face, but if one may judge by his back and his general appearance I should

say he was the keeper of a cigar shop in the Bowery, or perhaps the janitor of a gambling house. In either case he would be too good for her."

"Sit down here," said Rachel, as they reached the shed, "and let the ocean breezes cool your brain."

There were several rustic benches, more picturesque than comfortable, and on one of these the two friends sat. Meanwhile Billy and her man had apparently made up their differences, and were seen going back arm-in-arm toward the building—scarcely attaining a dignity above that of a shanty—into which they entered.

"I want you to come to the rehearsals of my play," said Miss Richardson at last, after the two had sat in silence for several minutes, "and I want you to criticise not only the playwright, but the actress. As regards the play, I have the assistance of Miss Durant, who is thoroughly acquainted with the technique of the stage, and to whose assistance I owe the fact that the situations are striking, and the scenery and dresses in keeping. Then, as she is such an accomplished actress, I found I could not do better than have her put me in training; so for the last six months or more I have been taking private lessons in stage manners. Of course my experience as a public lecturer has been of service to me."

"Certainly I'll come. Won't you tell me something of the play?"

"No, I think not. I would rather you would see and hear it on the stage first. Then you can read it afterward. You observe I did not invite you to come to a full public performance. I never waste civilities. By the time it is produced you will be in Mexico as the wife of Special Envoy the Hon. Tom Burton."

Rachel laughed merrily at this speech. "You are

taking time by the forelock," she said. "There's a good deal to be done yet before I am married, and," she added, seriously, "there may come many things to prevent me ever meeting Tom again."

"Well, now, I think we have had enough salt air, my dear, and if it's all the same to you we'll go back and get our breakfast. I'm as hungry as a Russian wolf in midwinter, and visions of that broiled bluefish which an hour ago was disporting itself in the waters of the Great South Bay are floating before me."

They rose and walked briskly along the board-walk that led to Mrs. Dominick's. The cool wind and the exercise had deepened the color on the cheeks of both the women, and the salt air had, as Miss Richardson said, given them ravenous appetites, besides quickening their pulses and freshening their mental powers. Rachel thought she would like to begin then to study her lecture, for she had rarely felt more capable of intense and sustained thought than at that moment. As to Miss Richardson, Rachel had never before seen her in a more changeful mood. Evidently the conversation relative to her troubles with Tom had revived recollections that had for a long time been kept out of mind, and the revivifying of which was not an agreeable process, or attended with pleasant results. Then she thought of Tom and of the possibility of their ever meeting again, and of the consequences likely to follow the renewal of their relations if they should meet. They approached the place where the two quarrelsome individuals had stood, and where the man had jumped down into the sand.

"Is that a card lying there on the sand?" said Miss Richardson. "It *is* a card. Rachel, my dear, get down there and pick it up. You are younger than I,

and my innate curiosity is too great to let a find like that go unnoticed."

"I will get it," said Rachel, laughing; "but as a punishment for being so inquisitive I shall not show it to you till we are back at Babylon."

She leaped lightly down on the sand, a distance of a couple of feet. The card lay with its face downward. She picked it up, and still laughing, put it into her pocket without looking at it, and then climbing up to the platform as gracefully as such an act could be performed, the two resumed their walk to their breakfast.

"You are cruel," said Miss Richardson, "and the only satisfaction I have is that you have not seen it yet yourself. I will bet you a pair of gloves that the name is either Fernandez or Alvaraz. But you are not to look till we get back to Babylon."

"Done!" said Rachel. "I take the bet."

They ate their breakfast with that degree of avidity which only those who have sailed over the Great South Bay early on a November morning can understand. And then they sailed back with a fair wind to carry the "Swan" to her destination. Awaiting Rachel on the table in her room was Mrs. Moultrie's letter; she read it with the joy which only a woman like her, capable of experiencing love in its intensest form, could feel. Then she called her friend. "Listen," she said, as she read an extract from the letter.

"He has just been telling me the whole story. My dear, he loves you with all his heart. Be sure of that. He is so honest and frank, and so anxious to see you again and "make up," as the children say, that it was hard for me to refrain from telling him to go to Babylon to-morrow. But I think my plan is the best, and that

the little delay will do him good. Telegraph me, then, at once.'

"Of course I shall go. Oh, how kind she is! Now you see what a good woman can do to make others happy. Now I must write and send the telegram at once, and this afternoon I must go back to New York. She says her carriage will meet me at Hunter's Point. How good she is!"

Rachel was all excitement over the prospect of going to Washington and of again meeting Tom. She wrote and despatched her telegram, and it was then arranged that Mrs. Meadows should remain at Babylon with Miss Richardson and some other friends she had discovered till Rachel's return.

"Now, my dear," said Miss Richardson, when all this business had been attended to, "stop your packing for a moment, and show me that card."

"Oh yes, the card!" exclaimed Rachel. "I had quite forgotten it." She took it from her pocket and looked at it. Then her face became very pale and grave. With a manifest effort she controlled herself and handed it to Miss Richardson. "You owe me a pair of gloves," she said, with a forced smile. Then her head seemed to reel, she dropped into a chair, and covering her face with her hands, burst into a passion of tears.

Miss Richardson took the card and read :

Mr. Tom Burton.

Menhaden Club.

CHAPTER XXIV.

A MEETING.

MISS RICHARDSON allowed the first semi-hysterical burst of grief to have its full sway and to work itself off. There was a certain amount of pent-up force to be gotten rid of, and there was not, according to her ideas, a safer or more effectual way than a flood of tears. It was not long before Rachel became calmer, and in a little while she dropped her hands from her face and looked inquiringly at her friend, who was standing near by, with Burton's card in her hand.

"Now, my dear," said Miss Richardson, "if you have become sufficiently calm to consider this matter in cold blood, we will go over it with the light of our positive and circumstantial evidence, and endeavor to understand what it all means. In the first place, you heard the man with that little Beast tell her that she had failed to get the man she was trying to inveigle into her snare ; then that she wished very much to get him out of the way in order, doubtless, that she might continue the seductive process ; and then the finding of Mr. Burton's card causes you to think that he is the man against whom her batteries are directed ; and this fear is strengthened by the knowledge you possess that he dined with her a night or two ago. Now, my dear, that is all there is of it, and I must say that I think you have shown a very decided deficiency in the good sense for

which I have always given you credit. You have exploded your nerve-force on the slightest jar. You remind me of those little glass balls called Prince Rupert's drops, which fly to pieces at a touch. Suppose he is the man she is trying to get—and I think that is very likely—what of it? You can't prevent other women falling in love with your Tom or admiring him. You ought to feel flattered when they do so, for it is the highest appreciation they can show of the good taste you yourself have shown. From her own confession she has not succeeded, and if she could—the Beast—get him away from my Beauty, in God's name, let him go! Oh, you little fool!" she continued, putting her arms around Rachel and pressing her head to her breast. "I can't help loving you; but if I thought all women were like you I'd give up contending for their rights. A pretty Judge of the Supreme Court of the United States you'd make."

"You wouldn't make a better one," said Rachel, raising her eyes with a smile. "You said this morning that you'd drown that woman, whether she were guilty or not."

"So I would! That I'll stick to through thick and thin, whatever that may be."

"I know I am very foolish, but the shock was so sudden, and caused such an entire revulsion, that I could not help giving way. Mrs. Moultrie's letter had made me so happy, and then came this discovery, showing, as I thought at the moment, such an entirely different state of affairs from that which I had just supposed to exist, that my brain seemed to fail me utterly."

"The truth probably is that the card was the one he left after dining with her. He cannot have seen much of her."

“No ; for Mrs. Moultrie states in her letter that he went to Washington the next day but one after we met at her house, and that he had returned the day she wrote, which was yesterday. No, he cannot have seen much of her.”

“Besides, he wants you. Mrs. Moultrie’s letter makes that perfectly apparent. So all you have to do is to go to New York in time to join them when they leave for Washington to-morrow morning.”

“Mrs. Moultrie will not only send her carriage across the ferry to meet me, but she insists that I shall come direct to her house and stay there over-night. Oh, Amelia !” she continued, throwing her arms around Miss Richardson’s neck, “I am so happy, and I am such a fool !”

“Whether you’re happy because you are foolish, or foolish because you’re happy, doesn’t, I suppose, make much difference. You are what the intellectual man calls ‘a true woman,’ and by ‘a true woman’ they mean one who—”

“Hasn’t got any sense,” interrupted Rachel, her face all smiles again. “Well, I don’t know how it is, but I really don’t think I’m quite so much of a fool as I thought. I’ve been able to get my own living. My life has not been altogether a useless one. In fact, I am quite sure that in my day and generation I have done some good. If I had never done anything more than teach young women astronomy I should not have lived in vain. But I don’t want to vote, I don’t want an office. I wouldn’t be a Supreme Court judge if you’d go down on your bended knees and beg me. On those points my mind has undergone a revolution, and Tom has done it.”

Miss Richardson looked at her with an expression in which it was evident that many varied emotions were contending for the mastery. Love, and sorrow, and regret, and perhaps a little envy were there. Then she turned away without a word and left the room. "She is one of those women—'true women' they are called"—she thought, as she went along the long, narrow hall to her own rooms, "who yearn for a baby's lips at their breast. The maternal instinct. It is said to be dying out in American women. I wonder if it is quite dead in me?" She entered her room without answering the question she had put to herself, and seating herself at the table, began a letter to the *Woman's Journal*, in which she took the most advanced views relative to woman's suffrage, which she declared was the only thing that could cause the sex to receive the respect which comes from the consciousness of equality with the other sex. "When we have to make the laws under which we live," she wrote, "then, and not till then, will man yield us a proper kind of respect. No respect is worth anything that is not based upon a certain amount of healthy fear. Now, when we wish to gain a point from man we cajole him. Then we should be able to terrorize him. It is perhaps a sad alternative that there is no other way by which he can be made to render justice to a long-oppressed part of the human race."

Rachel in the mean time was perfecting her arrangements for leaving Babylon on the four-o'clock train. Her mother was willing enough to stay, and willing enough, also, for Rachel to go. Though there was affection, there was not much community of sentiment between Mrs. Meadows and her daughter. The former was a chronic complainer. She was always talking of

the little physical ills—none of them of any consequence—to which women of her age are generally more or less subject, and this trait rendered her an unpleasant companion to any one. The whole world has agreed to regard the persons who are constantly drawing attention to their bodily ailments as unmitigated bores ; for though some cynic has said that there is no one who does not enjoy the misfortunes of his friends, this proclivity does not extend to diseases. The loss of a hundred thousand dollars on the part of a person dear to us, his failure to get an office for which he was an applicant, his breaking down in a speech he has tried to deliver, the smash up of his carriage, his slipping down in the mud and ruining his best evening suit, may each and all cause a thrill of joy to flash through our hearts. We may even be mildly hilarious should his wife elope with her coachman ; but when we hear that he has the diphtheria we are truly sorry ; and when he himself tells us of his aches and pains, so far from feeling any satisfaction at his misfortunes, we are distressed and annoyed. It was dangerous to ask Mrs. Meadows how she was ; for the imprudent individual that ventured on this benevolent question was certain to be stopped, even though his breakfast were waiting for him and getting cold, till she had recapitulated all her sensations and the absence of sensations with which she had been afflicted for the past twenty-four hours. In addition she had now the loss she had had entailed upon her by the stoppage of the Tillitudlum Plate-Glass Works. She inveighed bitterly against the company for presuming to stop, even if they were losing money, and especially against the Government for reducing the duty on plate-glass to such a low point that the home manufacturer could not compete

with the "pauper labor" of Europe. She had been talking with several political economists, and she had read articles in the newspapers on the subject, and she had discovered that since the suspension of plate-glass factories in various parts of the country the price of the material had advanced over twenty per cent. "Now," she said, with indignation in her voice and tears in her eyes, "that they have succeeded in crushing an infant American industry, they have put up the price to just what they choose to make it. Now perhaps they'll see the propriety of putting the duty back to where it was ; or, what would be better still, making it prohibitory."

So at four o'clock Rachel took her departure, Miss Richardson going with her in the omnibus to the station, and in due season she was sitting in a lovely little room talking with Theodora in regard to future plans in Washington. Lalage had gone for a ride in the Park with Tyscovus. Their love affairs were going on swimmingly. The day had been fixed for the wedding, and Theodora had a latent hope springing up within her that it might be within the range of possibility to have the Hon. Tom Burton and Miss Rachel Meadows married at the same time. This she kept to herself. It was not quite time for her to expose her plans to the parties most concerned.

"Mr. Burton went to Washington this morning," she said to Rachel. "I had a short note from him, written just before he started, and he is very unhappy."

"Very unhappy !" exclaimed Rachel, in a low tone and with a slight blush, for she thought Theodora alluded to the distress he felt at having to go away without seeing her.

"Yes ; and he authorizes me to tell you all about the

matter. Perhaps the simplest way would be to let you read his note ;" so saying she took from her pocket a letter, and handed it to Rachel.

Rachel took it and read as follows :

" MENHADEN CLUB, November 28, 1874.

" MY DEAR MRS. MOULTRIE : I am trying to submit quietly to the sentence of banishment that you have imposed upon me, though it is with great difficulty that I refrain from staying over till to-morrow and dropping in this evening after dinner." (" Poor Tom, I wish he had !" said Rachel to herself.) " But I promised to go to Washington, and before you get this I shall be nearly half way there.

" What I wish particularly to say now is that I am very unhappy on account of my agency in having the duty on plate-glass reduced. I did it, and I thought I was doing a good thing. Now, however, I find, what I did not know before, that the foreign manufacturers have combined to sell plate-glass at a price below the cost of manufacture for the purpose of destroying the American factories. They have succeeded to a great extent, and the price has now been advanced, and will probably go still higher. This is an effect that I did not anticipate, and that has opened my eyes to the erroneous character of many of my tariff notions.

" But I am distressed beyond measure at the loss that has happened to Rachel and her mother, and for which I cannot too strongly blame myself. Please tell her how bitterly I regret the part I had in the matter, and assure her from me, that immediately on my arrival in Washington I shall go to work to undo the evil I have done. I shall request a hearing before the Committee

on Ways and Means of the House, many of the members of which I know, and shall submit the evidence that I have in my possession of the disastrous effects of the change.

"I suppose it would scarcely be proper to make this a love-letter—to Rachel, of course—but I should like to do so. I shall be at the Ebbitt House, anxiously awaiting your summons.

"Yours sincerely,

"TOM BURTON."

"I don't care a bit about the loss of the money," said Rachel, when she had finished reading the letter. "What a kind heart he has! I am sorry he should trouble himself about it."

"It will give him something to do till he sees you. But there are Lalage and Mr. Tyscovus, and I must go and dress for dinner. We dine at seven, and you will have an opportunity of making the acquaintance of the dowager Mrs. Moultrie, as we call her. This is our last dinner in New York for some time to come, and she dines with us."

Rachel dressed and then descended to the drawing-room, where she found the whole company—Moultrie, Theodora, Lalage, Tyscovus, and the dowager—assembled. Greetings from those she knew and introductions to those she did not know of course ensued, and then they all moved in to dinner.

"Are you any relation to the Miss Meadows who lectures?" said the dowager, addressing Rachel, after they were seated at the table.

"Miss Meadows *is* the Miss Meadows who lectures," said Moultrie, answering for Rachel before she could do

so for herself, and anxious to prevent any offensive remarks by his mother by showing that he approved of what she had done in this respect, "and Miss Meadows is also the Miss Meadows who writes, and whose story, 'The Mystery of Mrs. Brown,' in the *Milky Way*, you were speaking of so warmly the other evening."

"Oh," exclaimed the dowager, "I am very much delighted to make the acquaintance of so distinguished a young lady. In my day—"

"In your day, mother," interrupted Moultrie, with a smile, but with a snap in his tone that warned the old lady that she was in danger of going too far—"in your day young ladies didn't know enough either to lecture or to write."

"I read 'The Mystery of Mrs. Brown' on my way here from St. Louis," said Tyscovus. "I congratulate Miss Meadows on having produced one of the best short stories I have ever read. It shows a wonderful fertility of imagination and a thorough knowledge of human nature."

"I am so glad you think so," said Rachel. "I am very anxious to become a good writer, and I think I would rather be the author of a successful novel—one that would really make its mark in the world—than have almost any other distinction granted me."

"I am quite sure it would be easy for you to obtain that distinction. You certainly possess the elements of success in that direction."

"There is room for a great novel, and for any number of them," said Moultrie. "There are three classes of novelists who are now engaging attention: the one has imagination, but no constructive skill or knowledge of human nature; the second has constructive skill, but no

knowledge of human nature and no imagination ; and the third has no imagination or constructive skill, or knowledge of human nature. The fourth class, having all these requisites, is yet to come. Till it does we shall have no great novelists. Miss Meadows," he continued, turning to Rachel, "I greet you as its first representative."

So they talked—all but Lal. She said very little, unless some remark were addressed to her, but then she answered with the good sense and directness for which she was noted among all who knew her. She conversed easily enough with one person, and if the subject were one in which she was interested and which she understood, she expressed herself with remarkable fluency. But general conversation upon matters arising at the moment was somewhat beyond her, and as to small-talk, she had not yet acquired the facility for saying bright things about nothing.

The next morning the whole party, with the exception of the dowager, took the limited express train for Washington. As the Moultrie residence was not quite prepared for their occupation, they went, with the exception of Tyscovus, to the Arlington, where suites of apartments had been engaged, and where they expected to remain for a week or ten days. Tyscovus, with a degree of delicacy rarely seen in these degenerate days, and which perhaps was carrying refinement in such matters a little too far, went to another hotel, the Ebbitt House, where he soon made the acquaintance of the Hon. Tom Burton, who had been twenty-four hours installed in that hostelry.

At first Tyscovus was inclined to think he should never become an admirer of the Hon. Tom. He was so

unlike all the men that he had yet seen that he was unprepared for the developments that burst upon him every few minutes. During his residence of over a year in Colorado he had encountered many types of humanity that were new to him ; but Burton was at the same time the most original and the most intellectual of all that had hitherto come in his way. There appeared to be a wonderful aptitude for grasping the salient points of a subject, but yet it seemed to Tyscovus that he seldom went to the depths of anything. He took off the foam and the light fluid that floated at the top of the beaker, but the heavier liquid at the bottom he did not reach.

But in a little while he perceived that when Burton took a personal interest in a subject he left no parts of it unexplored. It was only those topics for which he cared nothing, or at least very little, that he did not attempt to investigate deeply, and that he discussed more out of compliment to the persons with whom he was conversing than from other motives. He thought it simple politeness to endeavor to show that no subject that was introduced was indifferent to him, and hence it was that he had something to say that, if not deep, was at least sensible in regard to matters that most others would have treated with silence. Tyscovus thought he had never met with a more versatile man, or one with greater facilities of expression.

Congress was to meet on the next day but one, and already the city was filling up with the members and their constituents. There were many speculations as to with which party Moultrie would affiliate. The Republicans and Democrats were very nearly of equal force, and each was desirous of securing Moultrie. Prominent members of each of these organizations suggested to him

the propriety of uniting with their side and of going into their caucus, but he had long since decided that he would not formally unite with either party. On all questions that came up he should vote in accordance with his own views, which he believed agreed with those of the majority of his constituents. He was specially elected for the purpose of procuring important modifications of the tariff. The point that he should endeavor to secure was that of the free importation of all raw materials used in our manufacturing industries. Beyond that he was not at present prepared to go, though strongly inclined to abolish protective duties where protection by the solid establishment of home industries was no longer required.

At home, at all elections he had always been what is called a "scratcher"—that is, he had voted for the men that he thought were best fitted for the offices for which they were nominated, and that he conceived represented the principles that ought to prevail in the conduct of the Government, no matter to what party they belonged. It was his intention to act in precisely the same way in the elections necessary to the organization of the House.

Tyscovus had a good deal of business on behalf of the Territory he represented that he desired to bring before Congress. Having only the right to speak, without that of voting, it might have been thought by some that his position was one without much influence. But, on the contrary, being relieved from service on committees, and having therefore nothing to do with general legislation, he was enabled to give his whole time and attention to the wants of Colorado, a Territory which he was sure would, in a few years, be knocking at the door for admission into the Union. Questions relative to mines, to lands, and to the Indians were among the more impor-

tant of those that he had to bring forward. He was brimful of facts in regard to each of them, and he was so apt in his ability to present his views clearly and powerfully before an audience, that no one who knew him doubted that he would make a strong impression upon Congress.

And then he was at last about to be married to the woman whose story has been told elsewhere, and whom the better he knew the more he loved. Since his arrival in New York he had had more thorough opportunities for becoming acquainted with her than he had enjoyed in Colorado, when his love had first been formed. He had found that, while she had developed wonderfully in all those points that gave additional graces to her language and demeanor, she was unchanged in those qualities of head and heart that had first so strikingly impressed themselves upon him. In a few days she would be his wife, and then, when the session was over, she would go back with him to his home on the butte, a different structure altogether from the humble log-cabin in which he had first seen her ; and she a wonderfully different woman from the uncouth, half-clad girl who, as Jim Bosler's daughter, had endeavored to shield her supposed father from the consequences of the crimes she was confident he would commit.

As to the Hon. Tom, he had employed his time since his arrival in Washington in taking long walks out over the hills to the north, during which the Mexican mission occupied a rather remote position in his mind, all the advanced stations being filled with thoughts of persons and things of greater and more immediate importance. He had fully made up his mind that he would press for an immediate marriage with Rachel. The idea of going

to Mexico alone, and of being separated from her for a year and perhaps longer, was so repugnant to him that he had determined that if he could not, through his own efforts and those of Mrs. Moultrie—who he felt was his firm ally—persuade Rachel into yielding to his wishes, he would resign the appointment.

He had been dining with the Secretary of State, and had returned to his hotel well satisfied with the favorable impression he had made upon that functionary, when, as he was going to his rooms, to which he had invited Tyscovus to smoke a cigar, the clerk handed him a letter which he said had arrived by the late evening mail. Burton glanced at the direction, and seeing that it was from Mr. Roman, whom he had left in charge of his legal business, he put it into his pocket, intending to read it at his leisure in his own apartment. Arrived there, he sent for Tyscovus, and then making himself comfortable in dress and attitude, he took out the letter he had just received. But before he could begin to read it Tyscovus entered the room, and the two continued to talk and smoke late into the night. It was twelve o'clock when he took his departure and Burton had an opportunity to read his letter.

But the letter was not such pleasant reading as to make him desirous of receiving more like it. On the contrary, it caused him anger, disgust, fear, and several other disagreeable emotions. It was to the effect that early that morning a lawyer whose reputation at the bar was not of the best had called to say that his client, Miss Billy Bremen, had instructed him to begin a suit for damages to the extent of fifty thousand dollars against Burton ; but that she was desirous to avoid the scandal that such a suit would produce, and was not without the

hope that an arrangement could be made by which the necessity for its initiation could be obviated.

“Of course,” wrote Mr. Roman, “I could say nothing. I simply allowed the man to talk, which he did, and in the course of a few minutes he announced that Miss Bremen was sincerely attached to you, and was willing to abandon all intention of a suit for damages, provided you would renew your promise of marriage, and make her your wife. But that in the event of a refusal, the matter would be brought before the courts at once, and vigorously conducted to what he had no doubt would be a successful termination. Knowing nothing of the circumstances, I could say nothing in regard to your probable course of action, except to express the opinion that you were not a man to be threatened into doing anything, and that I would communicate with you at once. Of course, you know that you cannot be served while you are in Washington, and I am under the impression that your diplomatic position protects you from civil suits in any part of the country.”

“There is but one thing for me to do,” he said, after thoroughly mastering the contents of the letter, “and that is to see Rachel at once, and tell her of the whole affair, from beginning to end. It is simply an attempt at blackmail, and I shall immediately go back to New York and confront the vulgar little wretch.”

But he found it impossible to get rid of the matter so easily. Do what he would in the way of trying to under-rate it, or in keeping up his courage, the conviction forced itself upon him that it would, if persisted in, prove a very annoying piece of business. Of course the woman had attempted a fraud upon him, but it was nevertheless true that he had declared his readiness in a

certain contingency to marry her. True, she had declined his proposition, but he had no evidence of this to present beyond his own statement, and none on any point he might advance in his behalf, except his own declaration. And he knew enough of human nature, and especially of the nature of juries, to be aware that if Billy chose to swear, regardless of the sanctity of an oath, to anything she might think would help her case, the sympathy of the public and of the twelve men in the box would be with her, not him. And even in the event of her losing the suit—and that would be an exceedingly probable result, the jury failing to agree—the affair would be exceedingly disagreeable, and must inevitably result in the loss of a part of his prestige as a sensible man. He would be made a laughing-stock of New York and of the country at large, and the comic papers, always on the lookout for incidents of the kind, would not fail to make him the subject of caricature and would-be witty remarks. Yes, certainly, the matter had its disagreeable complications.

He passed a restless night, scarcely sleeping a wink, tossing restlessly from one side of the bed to the other, his mind filled with the thoughts excited by the scheme of the horrible woman whom he had, in a moment of infatuation, proposed to marry. For this act of weakness he felt that he could never forgive himself; and what, he asked himself, must Rachel Meadows think when she heard him make the humiliating confession that he had asked the vulgar little butcheress to be his wife? Gloss it over as he might, he knew it would be a shock to her, and that he must suffer in her estimation as a man of sense, and, perhaps, even in her love.

He rose early, took a hasty breakfast, and then started

out for a walk, hoping that the bracing morning air might have the effect of cooling his brain and dissipating the racking headache with which he had awakened. He went out Connecticut Avenue as far as the street extended, and then across to Vermont Avenue, by which he returned to Lafayette Square. Here he sat down on one of the benches to rest, for he had walked briskly, and felt a little healthy fatigue. All the time during his walk he had been formulating in his mind the course of procedure he should adopt relative to communicating with Rachel. He felt that every moment of delay now was agony to him, and that it was dangerous to allow any time to be lost in meeting the attack that had been made. Finally he had determined that he would go back to his hotel and send a note to Mrs. Moultrie, requesting her permission to call immediately on Rachel, and that after he had arranged matters with her he would at once return to New York and face the horrid woman who was endeavoring to force him into marrying her. He rose from the bench, and turned to retrace his steps toward Vermont Avenue, when, face to face with him, and not five feet from where he stood, was Rachel Meadows ! Her first impulse seemed to be to turn and run away as fast as she could ; but he had seen her and caught her eye, and escape was impossible. She therefore continued her course, and he, advancing, raised his hat and held out his hand.

“ Good-morning, Tom ! ” she said, as she laid her hand in his, while a smile and a blush appeared on her face. “ You are very kind to forgive me for my conduct toward you the other night. It was not because I did not love you ; for I did, Tom, and I do now ; but you were so impetuous and I was so taken by surprise that I thought—I thought—”

“My darling!” interrupted the ecstatically bewildered Burton, raising her little gloved hand to his lips. “Forgive you! It is I who need forgiveness. I acted like a brute. When I received your letter I ought to have gone at once to you, and then there would have been no further trouble. Oh, my beauty! My darling! how happy your honest, frank, and gracious speech makes me!”

“Then you love me as much as you did when you told me that your gondola was waiting below?”

“A thousand times more. But come! Take a few turns around the square with me. There isn’t a soul in it, and we can talk as much as we please.”

Rachel readily acceded; and when they had discoursed sufficiently of their feelings for each other—at least sufficiently to get rid of the superabundance of sentiment that crowded to their hearts and mouths—Burton, in his most diplomatic manner, but without sparing himself—and, indeed, he felt that he should appeal more strongly to Rachel’s tenderness for him if he *did not* spare himself—began the story of his affair with Billy Bremen. He told it so well, and so feelingly, and with so many self-reproaches, that before he was half through Rachel laid her hand on his arm. He gave her a look of love and thankfulness, for he felt that the victory was won, and that now he had Rachel as an ally in his crusade against Billy.

“What a horrid woman!” said Rachel, when he had finished. “Oh, Tom, don’t think that I love you any the less on her account! I love you more, for it all shows that you have a heart. It was music that first brought you to me, dear.”

“No, darling; I loved you when I first saw you. It wasn’t that awful woman I loved, but her music, and

that, for the moment, bewildered me. You're an angel!" he continued, as he thought of her continued love for him, notwithstanding his escapade with Billy. "And now I've got to leave you and go back to New York to fight that woman! I think when she finds that I would rather be thrown into the bottomless pit, 'where shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth,' than marry her, she will give up the attack."

"But you won't have to go back to New York!" exclaimed Rachel, as she thought of the knowledge of Billy she had obtained on the beach at Fire Island. "She's married, and I've seen her husband!"

"Married!"

"Yes; there's no doubt of it; I heard the conversation between her and her husband about her designs on you." Then Rachel told all she knew of Billy and her male companion, who was doubtless her husband.

The whole matter was a revelation and a relief to the Hon. Tom, who, of course, had nothing to fear from a suit for breach of promise of marriage brought by a married woman.

"Still," he said, "I think I had better return immediately, armed with the information you have given me. It will be sufficient to crush her at once, and all her blackmailing operations with her."

"It would be bigamy, wouldn't it," said Rachel, "if she was to marry you?"

"Yes; and that's a penitentiary offence. She won't want to risk the State's prison when she is made aware that I know she has a husband living."

"And such a horrid-looking man, too!" exclaimed Rachel, surveying her Tom, with admiration depicted in her pretty, soft brown eyes.

“Don’t you think I’d better go home with you now, and then we can sit and talk together, and I’ll not leave till the night train?”

“How surprised Mrs. Moultrie will be!” exclaimed Rachel. “She was going to write a note to you to-day asking you to come round this evening, but I think this is much better. It’s so much less formal.”

“I don’t know about the less formality,” said Burton, ruefully. “It seems to me that there’s more here than there would have been if we had had Mrs. Moultrie’s parlor to ourselves. Still, it is delightful to meet you here or anywhere, and to look at your sweet face and hear your loving words. I was in the depths of misery till I looked up and saw the sun that was to dispel all my clouds.”

So they talked as lovers have talked before since the creation of the world, and as they will talk to its end.

CHAPTER XXV.

“ALL’S WELL THAT ENDS WELL.”

BURTON had never yet had an opportunity of kissing Rachel, and the first thing he did on entering Mrs. Moultrie’s snug little parlor was to clasp her in his arms, while he imprinted kiss after kiss on her lips, accompanied with many exclamations of her being his “darling,” his “dear love,” “the sweetest girl that ever was born,” and so on through the gamut of endearments that all lovers know so well. Finally Rachel released herself.

“Now, sir,” she said, with a smile that showed that Burton’s proceedings had not been displeasing to her, “please to behave yourself for the rest of the morning, at any rate. See how you’ve ruined my hat! This feather is crushed into all kinds of shapes, and there isn’t a place in Washington where I can get another like it.”

“I’ll send you a bird of paradise from New York as soon as I get there, and in the mean time, as things about the hat can’t apparently be any worse than they are now, I’ll—”

He did not finish the speech. Actions sometimes speak louder than words.

“Oh, Tom!” exclaimed Rachel, as soon as she could get a chance to speak, and throwing her arms around his neck, “I think I am the happiest woman in all the world, and you do love me, don’t you?”

“Love you!” exclaimed the love-intoxicated Tom,

"I adore you ; I think you the sweetest, the prettiest, the brightest little woman God ever made !"

"But I am not so little, Tom ; I am five feet five. And you ? You're a splendid-looking man."

"I'm six feet two," said the Hon. Tom, self-complacently, "and," he added, "stout in proportion."

"Did you ever fight ?" inquired Rachel, looking at him admiringly, and with the consciousness of possession that a child has when it critically examines a new toy. "I don't mean in battle. *That* I know you've done ; but I mean a fight with a man about anything."

"I knocked a man down once."

"Did—did it kill him ?"

"Well, no," said the Hon. Tom, stroking his mustache, "it didn't exactly kill him, but it hurt him a good deal."

"The horrid wretch ! What had he done ?"

"Well," answered the honorable gentleman, with some little hesitation, "he was making a speech against me when I ran for Congress, and he said I was a 'hum-bug.' When he had finished I asked him what he meant, and as his answer was not so satisfactory as I thought it ought to have been, I knocked him down."

"I wonder you didn't kill him !" said Rachel, indignantly. "Oh, Tom," she continued, somewhat illogically, but burying her face in his shirt-front, "suppose he had killed you ! What a miserable woman I should have been !"

Of course Tom consoled her after his fashion, which was a very pleasant fashion to both of them.

"Now I really must take off my things," said Rachel, again releasing herself. "Good gracious !" she continued, as she picked up a letter from the table,

“here has this been lying all the time, and I never saw it !”

“No, but you’ve seen something a good deal better. You’ve seen the inside of my heart.”

“Yes, dear ; but stop one moment,” said Rachel, who had begun to read her letter. “This is very wonderful ! Shall I read it to you ? Oh, Tom, it looks as if everything was coming right ! The horrid woman !”

“Yes, sit here on the sofa by me and read it. Then perhaps I shall be able to understand it better than I do from what you have let fall.”

“It is from my friend, Miss Richardson,” said Rachel, complying with Burton’s request. “And perhaps you won’t have to go to New York, after all. The horrid, horrid woman !” Then she read as follows :

“BABYLON, November 30, 1874.

“MY DEAR RACHEL : I write because I have important matters to communicate to you, and which I think will give you great satisfaction. When I can do anything to make you happy, my Beauty, I am always anxious to do it at once.

“This morning, while I was busy on my letter to the *Woman’s Journal*, the servant brought me a card on which was inscribed the name of ‘Miss Billy Bremen.’ I sent back word to say that I was engaged and couldn’t see the lady, but to my surprise she came up and entered my room before I had time to lock the door in her face.

“‘I have come, Miss Richardson,’ began the artful little Beast, ‘knowing that you are a friend of Miss Meadows, to ask you to use your influence with her to warn her against receiving the attentions of Mr. Tom Burton. He is engaged to me, and if he does not fulfil

his promise of marriage, I shall bring a suit against him for damages.’

“I listened, as you may suppose, knowing what I did, with perfect astonishment to this declaration of the brazen little huzzy. She must have perceived the look of surprise on my face, for she said :

“ ‘ You seem to be overwhelmed, Miss Richardson. I have stated nothing to you but facts, and I have come in the interest of Miss Meadows, whom I desire to spare the shame of being mixed up in the affair.’

“ Then I broke out on her.

“ ‘ Yes, madam,’ I said, ‘ I am astounded at your effrontery in daring to come to me with such false pretences in your heart. You bring a suit for breach of promise ! You, a married woman ! Why didn’t you bring your husband, the Cuban, with you ? ’

“ ‘ I’m not married ! ’ she exclaimed. ‘ It’s a falsehood.’

“ ‘ You are married,’ I said, with as much calmness as I could command, though I was dying to take the little Beast by the shoulders and put her out of the room, ‘ for I saw you at Fire Island walking with him, and heard him call you his wife, and you trying to get him to promise to go away. How much did you give him to go in order that you might carry out more effectually your schemes against Mr. Burton ? Was it ten thousand dollars ? It was not enough. Give him more, and try your low wiles on some other man. Him you will never get, for he’s going to marry Miss Meadows.’

“ I thought I might safely venture to make this last statement.”

The reading of the letter was interrupted for a moment by the Hon. Tom after his usual method.

“ ‘ Well,’ continued Rachel, reading, ‘ I wish you could have seen the effect produced by my words. She collapsed at once. Her face became as purple as a piece of pickled cabbage, and I thought she was going to have a fit. She didn’t, however, but she broke down into a paroxysm of hysterical sobbing—part of which I am sure was intentional exaggeration—and then declared that she would give up all her horrid plots provided I would keep quiet about my information.’ ”

“ I insisted, however, that you and Mr. Burton should be told, and that as—after putting you on your guard—it was none of my business, the affair, so far as I was concerned, should go no farther. I added, however, that as to the giving up of her nefarious designs, she might do as she pleased, and that I supposed she was not going to endeavor to force a marriage which, if she succeeded in obtaining, would lead to her incarceration in Sing Sing for bigamy.

“ Then she left me ; but in the afternoon, on her way back to New York, she stopped at the Watson House to get dinner, and took the occasion to introduce me to her husband. He is bad enough, but he is better than she is, as I said when I first saw them together. She has concluded, so she said, to live with her husband, and to have him take charge of her *abattoir*. He doesn’t keep a cigar-shop in the Bowery, neither is he the door-keeper of a gambling-saloon. He is something between both—that is, he is a billiard-marker, but not such a bad fellow as you might take him to be from what you know of him. He has better manners than she has, and fully as much, if not more, principle. So, my dear child, the Señora Billy Mendez—it ought to be Mendax—passes out of your life, and the story of ‘ Beauty and the Beast ’ comes to its end.

“Doubtless you are happy now, as you deserve to be. I shall soon be an old woman, as I am now an old maid, but I hope to live long enough to see you grow in happiness and in every good and perfect gift. Oh, my darling, if—but I am wandering from my subject. Good-by. Give my love to—I scarcely know yet what to call him, and I shall therefore give him the name you gave him, ‘dear Tom!’

(“You angel!” exclaimed the honorable gentleman, kissing the tears from Rachel’s eyes. “What a brute I’ve been.”)

“And think of me always,” read Rachel, sobbing now with the excess of her emotion, “as your

“Devoted friend,

“AMELIA RICHARDSON.”

“Oh, how good she is!” exclaimed, Rachel. “When she’s a friend she is wholly one. And now,” she added, “you won’t have to go to New York.”

“No, dear; I shall stay here, if only to beg you to fix the day for our marriage, and to make it as early as possible.”

“Oh, but I am not ready, and mamma isn’t here, and she doesn’t even know anything about you. Besides, I ought to be married at home. It isn’t respectable for a girl to be married at a place she’s only visiting.”

“Be married wherever you please, my angel, only so that it’s before the 20th of December. Surely, three weeks are enough for preparations, and you can write to your mother to-night.”

“I don’t know,” rejoined Rachel. “I shall have to talk it over with Mrs. Moultrie; you know I’m under her care now. She’s responsible for me.”

“ Oh, I am ?” exclaimed Theodora, who, entering the room at the moment, had heard these last words. “ And this is the way you impose burdens on me. Well, sir,” turning to Burton, with an assumed air of severity, “ what do you mean by coming here before you were invited ?”

“ If you please, ma’am,” said Burton, affecting great alarm, “ I didn’t come ; I was fofched.”

“ Oh, you were ‘ fofched ! ’ By which barbarous expression I suppose you mean that some one brought you ?”

“ Yes, ma’am, please ma’am,” said Burton, trembling like an aspen leaf, as though frightened out of his wits.

“ And so, like another man, when accused of a crime, you lay it on some one else ? A woman, I suppose, as he did ? And may I ask,” as Burton nodded his head in assent, “ who was the woman that brought you here ?”

Burton pointed his finger at Rachel, who was nearly exploding with the effort to keep from laughing, and at this gesture of her lover, accompanied as it was with the most ludicrous expression of terror on his face, could contain herself no longer, but made the room ring with her merry peals.

“ I found him, Mrs. Moultrie,” she managed at last to say, “ sitting on a bench in Lafayette Square, and looking such a pitiable object, that for common humanity’s sake I took compassion on him.”

“ So I suppose you have made up all your differences,” said Theodora, smiling, “ and that my services are no longer needed ?”

“ But, most gracious lady, they are needed now more than ever,” said Burton. “ That young woman, with

the natural perversity of young women, wants to marry me.”

“Oh, Tom,” cried Rachel, laughingly, “what an awfully vain fellow you are ! Do *all* young women want to marry you ?”

“Don’t interrupt the court, please. As I was saying, that young woman, although she wants to marry me, yet, with the natural perversity of young women, declares that she requires time, and talks about mothers in New York, and not being ready, and all that sort of thing, as if any one of them, or all put together, could be set up against the awful fact that I’m going to Mexico on the twentieth of next month. Now, most inestimable and highly magnificent sovereign, won’t you, in the exercise of your high mightiness, do what Providence, perhaps from oversight, seems to have neglected, put a little of the milk of common-sense into her noddle, and tell her that she *must* be ready by the nineteenth at farthest, for that otherwise an ambassador will be spoiled ? For I do most solemnly declare that unless she marries me before the twentieth I will never set foot out of this country, and then the Mexican affair will all go to—pot.”

“It has been determined to-day,” answered Theodora, “that Lalage and Mr. Tyscovus are to be married on the eighteenth. Now, Mr. Burton, if you will kindly take yourself off and allow Miss Meadows and myself to talk the matter over, I’ll see what I can do for you.”

“I will go instantly. I leave my cause in your hands, conscious that I have an advocate capable of softening the most obdurate heart. Good-by,” he continued, shaking them each by the hand. “I’ll look in again in half an hour.”

“Half an hour !” exclaimed Theodora. “Was there

ever such a man ! Do you think that such an important matter can be settled in half an hour ? Come back to dinner at seven, and then, as the advertisements say, ' you may hear of something to your advantage. ' ”

He laughed and left the room. Need it be said that Theodora argued his cause so eloquently that the “ obdurate heart ” was mollified, and that when he came to dinner it was settled that there should be a double marriage in old St. John’s Church on the eighteenth, and a quiet wedding-breakfast afterward at Mrs. Moultrie’s Washington home. In other respects it was decided, as more in accordance with the wishes of the parties most concerned, that there should be no magnificence.

Congress had met, Moultrie had been placed on several important committees, chief among them being that on “ Ways and Means. ” He soon found, however, that it was impossible to effect any important modification of the tariff, even in the one matter of reducing the duties on raw materials. He prepared a bill, however, providing for such reductions, but it went to the committee, and then it was killed, only one member besides himself voting in its favor. The Hon. Tom was, however, more successful with his bill. He had succeeded in getting a prominent member to adopt a draft, which he had submitted, providing for a restoration of the duty on plate-glass to its previous rate. Moultrie did not oppose this measure, for he was intelligent enough to perceive that in the present condition of the industry it was wise to afford it protection. The bill was reported favorably by the committee, and passed the House among the first measures acted upon by that body.

The Moultries had moved into their house. Rachel had made a trip to New York, escorted by the Hon.

Tom, and had returned, bringing her mother with her, at Theodora’s request, and all the paraphernalia she considered necessary for her wedding and for use during her anticipated absence in Mexico. Miss Richardson had announced her intention of being present, and had been invited to stay with the Moultries. Burton had given his lecture in Boston with great *éclat*.

Tyscovus had made one speech in the House, and it had attracted attention as containing the most practical suggestions relative to the Indian question that had yet been made. He advocated the domiciliation and education of the Indians, and the prohibition of the alienation of the land that each head of a family was to receive in fee-simple, and in an amount—large enough in any case—proportioned to the number of his children. They were also to be taught trades, so that they would not be altogether an agricultural population.

After the wedding he and his wife were to reside with the Moultries till his return, some time in the summer, to the elegant home he had built on the butte, which had become so dear to them both. His political prospects were excellent. It was quite certain that Colorado would be admitted into the Union in the course of a couple of years, and that he would be one of the first senators from the new State.

Lal’s entrance into Washington society had caused such a flutter among young army and navy officers and diplomatic functionaries, that the like of it had never before been witnessed in the Capital. Some points in her personal history had gotten out, and thus served to make her still further the object of attention. Her beauty was considered to be somewhat phenomenal, even in that city of beautiful women, and when she visited

the Houses of Congress, as she did with Theodora nearly every day, she was at once surrounded by a circle of young and old—honorable senators and representatives, with a sprinkling of diplomatists, who seemed to be spellbound by her beauty and vivacity. Not even the knowledge of the fact that she was engaged to be married served to keep them away. It was an education in æsthetics to look at her.

Tyscovus found that his position in Washington society was well assured, mainly by the knowledge which several high representatives of European governments had of him and of his antecedents. Thus the Russian, the German, the Austrian, and the British ministers were well acquainted with his name and with the important place that his family had occupied in the history of Poland. Although he was well known to be in favor of the nationalization of Poland, the relations between him and the Russian Government were friendly enough, and they were put upon a still better footing when it became known that he was about to wed a daughter of an old and distinguished Polish house.

Theodora had made her mark in Washington life. She had had several dinners and receptions. At the former some of the most remarkable men and women of the day—persons distinguished for their cleverness in some one or more directions—and the latter were crowded by the best of those people living at the Capital who delight in such affairs.

Miss Richardson arrived from New York the day before the double wedding was to take place. Her play had had several rehearsals, and it was announced for production early in January. Her views relative to woman's rights had not undergone any change, but she was be-

ginning to lose faith in her sex, so far as their desire for additional rights was concerned. She had been much struck by a little speech that Moultrie had made at dinner, when the subject had been introduced by her, in the course of which she had made the remark that she was beginning, to despair of her sex.

"Depend upon it," he said, "that the woman's-rights movement is all wrong, so far as it places any blame on man for the lack of facilities for educating women that undoubtedly exists. The reproach rests with women. They do not want superior education as a sex. When they do they will get it, for then they will take sufficient interest in the matter to do something more than talk about being oppressed by man. There are plenty of rich women in the world. There are women in New York wealthy enough to found a complete university, and scarcely miss the money. Why don't they do it? Because they don't care whether women have higher education or not. There have been many female sovereigns in all parts of the civilized world. Did any one ever hear of a university for women being founded by them? Now, it seems to me that instead of denouncing men for not changing the system of education that they have found by experience is best for men, so as to take women into their colleges and universities, they should try to lead the rich women up to the proper point. Providence helps those who help themselves. When women are in earnest in this matter, they will have all the educational facilities they need, just as when they want to vote and hold public offices they will do so. As a matter of fact, they don't want higher education, and they don't want to vote."

"I am really afraid you are right," said Miss Richard-

son. "It seems impossible to arouse sufficient enthusiasm in the sex to inaugurate a determined contest. The great mass of women are indifferent. And then even the best workers, like Mrs. Moultrie and Rachel, desert the cause when—"

"Oh, Miss Richardson," exclaimed Theodora, "don't place me, please, among those who have proved faithless." She exchanged glances with Moultrie as she spoke.

"Certainly, my dear," he said, as though in answer to an inquiring look.

"Tell Mary," said Theodora, addressing François, "to go to my boudoir and bring me a letter that she will find on the desk."

In a few moments the letter was placed in Theodora's hands.

"It is addressed to you, Miss Richardson," said Theodora. "I had intended to give it to you to-morrow, when our two girls are to be married, and I am afraid you will find it dated the eighteenth. That is a little fiction excusable under the circumstances, for the letter was written several days ago."

Miss Richardson took it. "Shall I read it?" she said.

"Yes; there are no strangers among us; and perhaps our friends will excuse you."

It was very short. It merely announced that Theodora Moultrie intended to give to a university for the education of women the sum of two hundred and fifty thousand dollars, whenever an act of incorporation was obtained; and in five years to give a like sum additional thereto, provided if within that period five hundred thousand dollars should have been subscribed by others.

"You will have something to do," said Theodora, as

the letter dropped from Miss Richardson’s hands—and that lady looked the picture of surprised delight—“in getting the half million. I think we shall find out now whether women care for higher education or not.”

“I am unable to thank you,” murmured Miss Richardson, scarcely above her breath. “My heart is too full, but you know all I would say. Oh, if there were more like you, how different the position of women would be !”

“Yes, it might be different, but I am not sure that it would be better. There is such a thing as over-education for women as well as for men, and the point is sooner reached with us than with the other sex. However, I should like to try the experiment on a small scale. I make, as you see, but two conditions, and that is that the instruction shall be free, and that the university shall not bear the name of any living person.”

And then the 18th of December came. The little church was crowded. There were no bridesmaids. The two grooms, each with his best man—Count Stephen Niemcewicz, who had come to Washington to pass the winter, and who was an old friend, with Tyscovus ; and Brevet Major-General James Madison Rowley, of the United States Army, with Burton. The bridal party entered the church at eleven o’clock precisely to the strains of the wedding march of *Lohengrin*—Lal, the loveliest woman—so every one said—that had ever been inside of that church, leaning on the arm of her father, and followed by her mother and Dr. Willis, who had come all the way from Hellbender to be present. Then came Rachel, scarcely less beautiful than Lal, escorted by her uncle, Professor Meadows, of the Naval Academy, who was to give the bride away, and followed by her mother and

Miss Richardson. The two grooms advanced to meet the procession, and then the party stood in front of the chancel, and the impressive service that was to unite them began.

A more distinguished assemblage it would have been difficult to get together. The President, and most of the members of the Cabinet ; senators, representatives, nearly the whole of the diplomatic corps, army and navy officers, men and women distinguished in social, scientific, literary, and artistic life, were there. Every one within hearing wished to see how Rachel would reply to the question in regard to her obedience to her future husband ; but there was no evasion, no shunning of the words "I will." Her freedom had gone, her slavery had begun ; she had become the bond-woman of a man. So thought two or three advanced agitators. As to Rachel, she was quite sure that the happiness of her life was linked with that of the man who stood by her side, and who had promised to love, to cherish, and to cleave unto her so long as they both should live. She had all the rights she wanted.

And Lal. You may be sure, reader, that there was no faltering on her part. Her lover to her was almost a god. What she was she owed to him more than to any one else in all the world, and yet the greater part of his influence had been of that quiet, passive, though not less powerful kind that every good man exerts upon those with whom he is thrown into association.

The double ceremony was over ; the organ pealed forth a gorgeous melody ; friends rushed forward with their congratulations, eager to be among the first to say "Mrs. Tyscovus" and "Mrs. Burton." The eyes of both brides—as are the eyes of most brides upon such

occasions—were filled with tears, and as they walked out of the church, leaning on the arms of their respective husbands, the curiously impertinent pressed forward to catch a glimpse of their faces. Then they entered the two carriages that were to take them to Moultrie's to breakfast, to which a goodly company had been invited. After that they were going to New York in a special train.

As the first carriage, containing Tyscovus and his wife, was driven rapidly out of the crowd that had assembled about the church, their eyes met. Neither spoke a word, but she took her husband's hand and raised it to her lips.

"God bless you, my darling!" said the Hon. Tom, as his carriage got out of the crowd. "May you never regret this day. You're not sorry you married me, are you, my Beauty?"

"Not yet, Tom, dear," said Mrs. Burton, as she laid her head on his shoulder, "and I don't believe I ever shall be, even if I live a thousand years. But my lectures 'On the Position of Woman Outside Christianity,' they will never be begun, will they?"

"Well, not in that form exactly, my dear little wife, but doubtless you'll lecture me sometimes."

THE END.



92

14 DAY USE
RETURN TO DESK FROM WHICH BORROWED
LOAN DEPT.

This book is due on the last date stamped below, or
on the date to which renewed.
Renewed books are subject to immediate recall.

FEB 9 1967 1

IN STACKS

JAN 26 1967

RECEIVED

MAR 3 '67 -2 M

LOAN DEPT.

APR 22 1984

RETD APR 19 1984

